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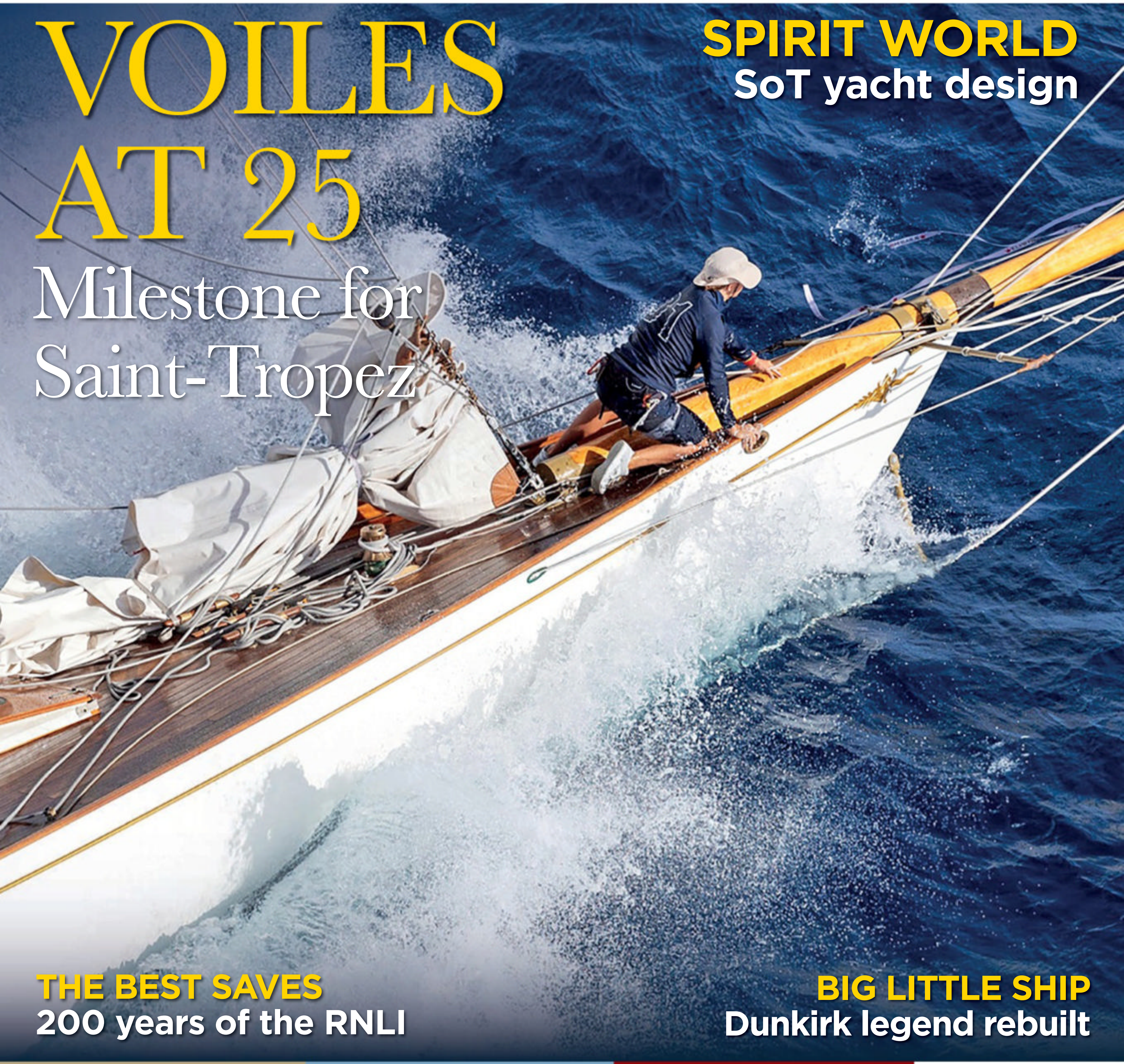

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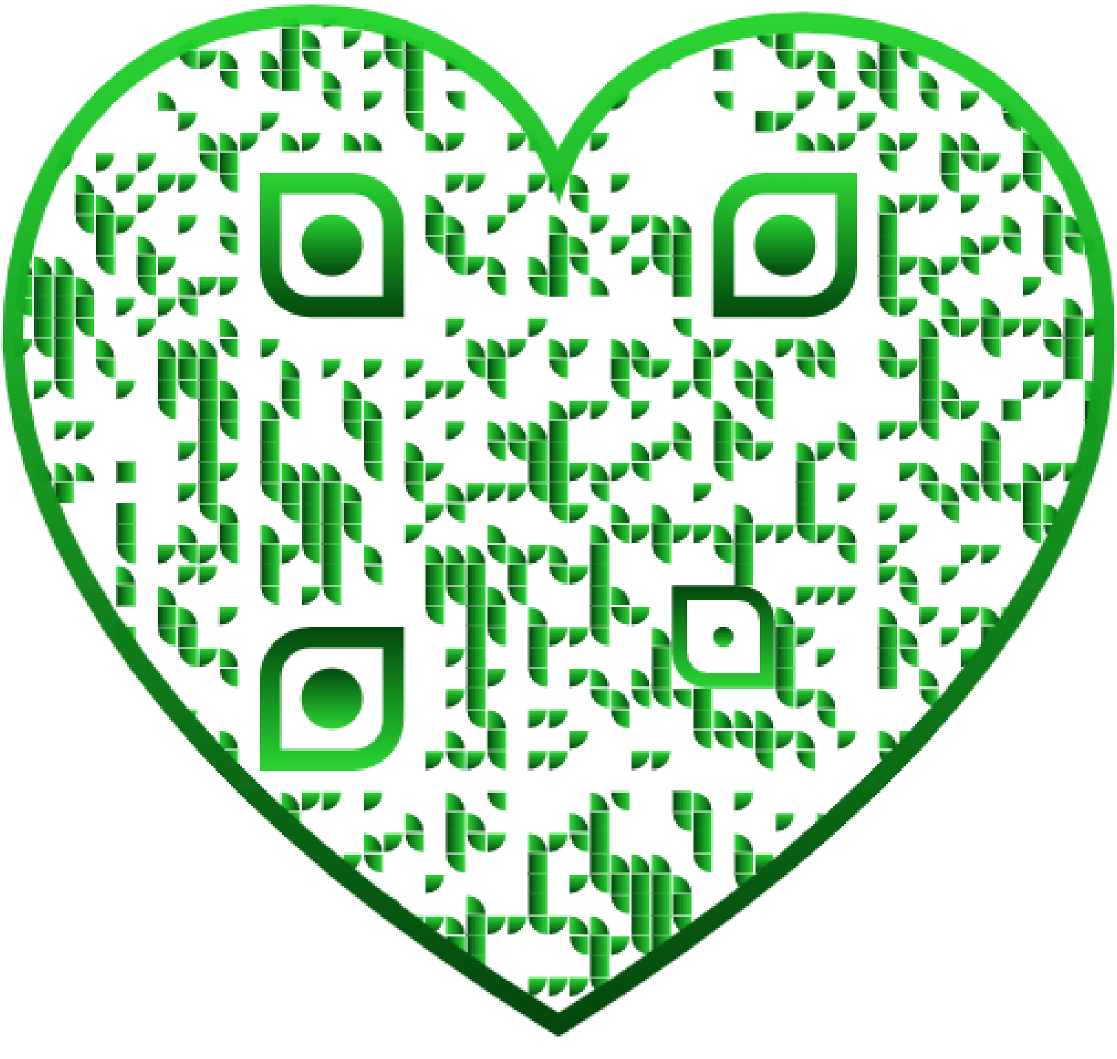

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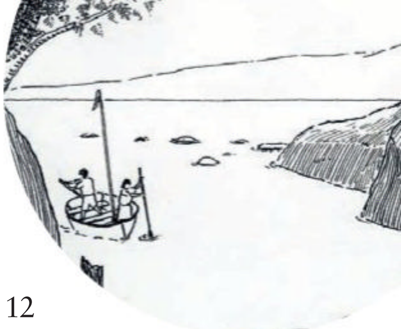

STEFFAN MEYRIC HUGHES, EDITOR

Arthur Ransome's best boat is back

Was there ever anyone who did as much to popularise sailing, at least in Britain, as Arthur Ransome? His 12 children's books, running from *Swallows and Amazons* to *Great Northern*, written from 1929 to 1947, surely sold in the millions, and the tales of freedom and adventure under sail and canvas for 'free range' children in the inter-war years incited countless sailors of all ages to take to the waters. Ransome was a sailor himself of course, and something of a serial yacht owner. The 7-tonne Hillyard *Nancy Blackett* featured as *Goblin* in *We Didn't Mean To Go to Sea* is still afloat and thriving, thanks in no small part to the efforts of ex-CB's Peter Willis, who presents to us this month the greatest of all Ransome's yachts: *Selina King*, risen from the dead and back sailing where she belongs on the waters of Suffolk. A little furthr north, we're sailing in the Lake District with the story of the 17ft Windermere One-Designs, still afloat and active after 120 years. And still in Britain, we are looking at the extraordinary 'Little' Ship (she's 78ft long) *Llanthony*, a rare example of a big Camper & Nicholson inter-war motor yacht, built in steel and restored by a yard better known for working with Dunkirk Little Ships built in wood.

Classic Boat

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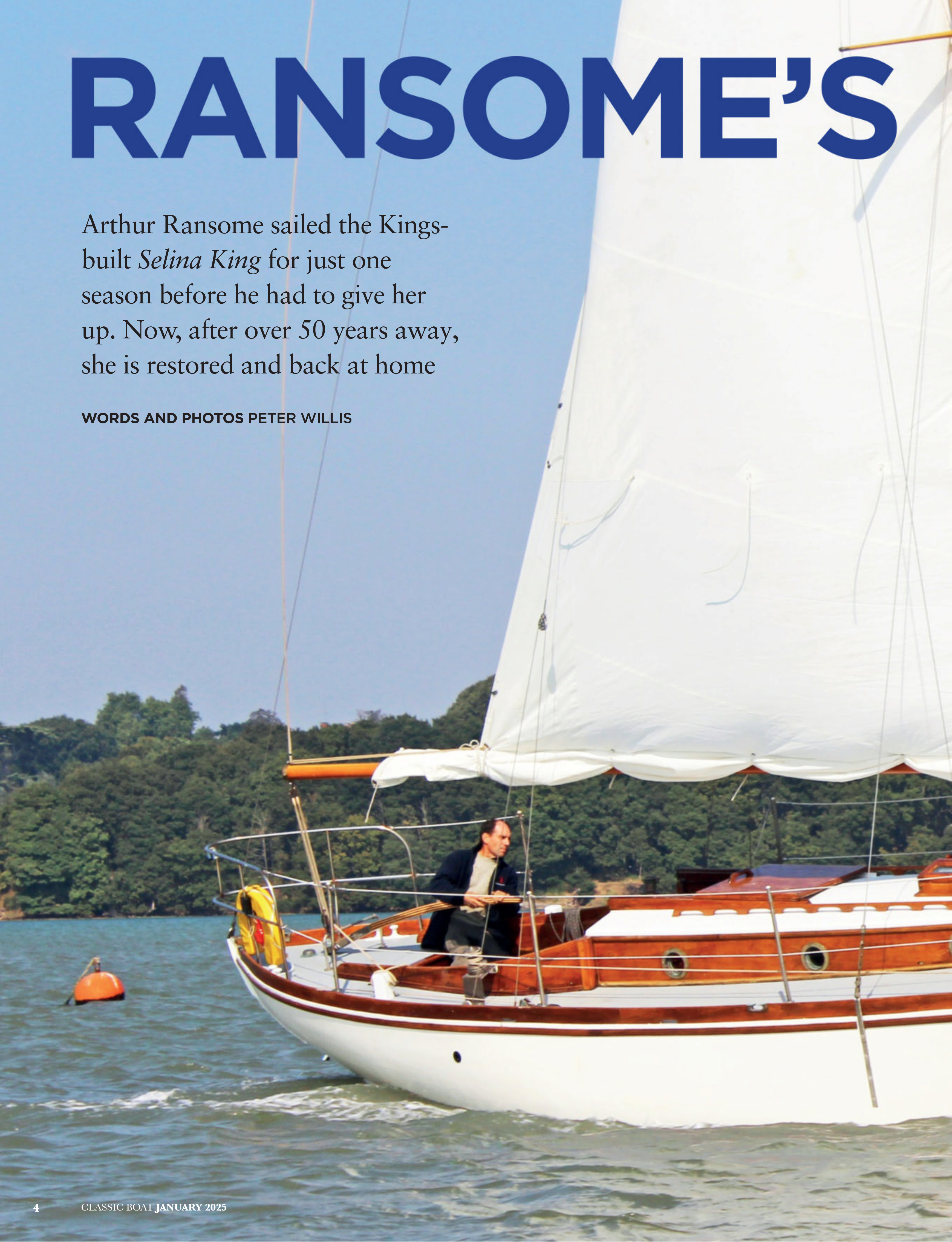
RANSOME'S

Arthur Ransome sailed the Kings-built *Selina King* for just one season before he had to give her up. Now, after over 50 years away, she is restored and back at home

WORDS AND PHOTOS PETER WILLIS



KING

Selina King

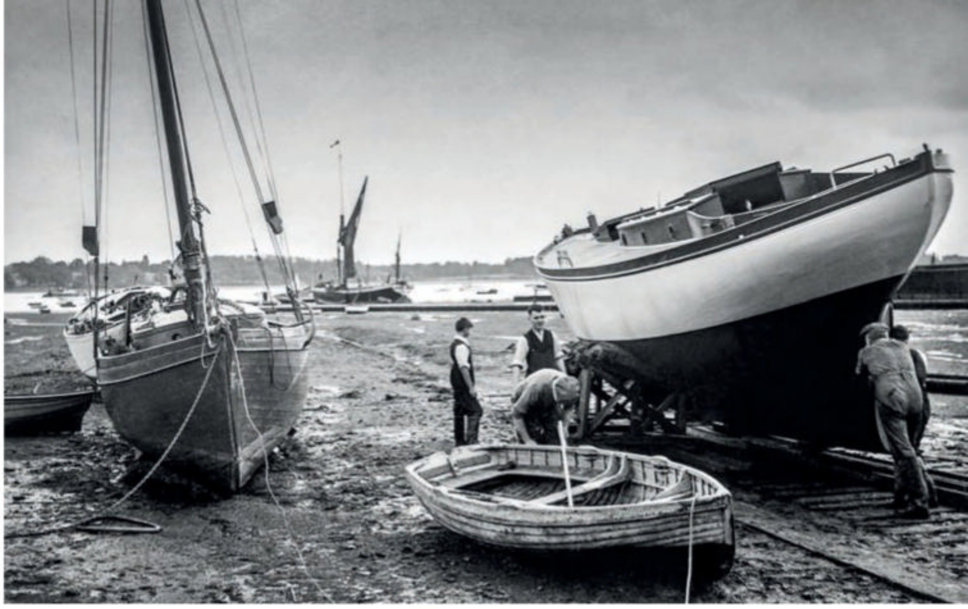


PHOTO: RANSOME LITERARY ESTATE, WITH PERMISSION

An evening in late September 2022, dusk. I arrive at Fox's vast boatyard, on the River Orwell in Suffolk, just in time to meet a boat being carefully reversed between the buildings on a low loader. It's something of an occasion: my first view of the yacht that I first heard of over 30 years ago.

She is *Selina King*, the largest and finest of Arthur Ransome's yachts, and now, after over half a century of very mixed fortunes in Bermuda and America, she is coming home at last, to complete her restoration in Harry King's yard at Pin Mill, where she was built.

She has been delivered to Fox's because the narrow lane down to Pin Mill couldn't cope with the lorry and its load, and for the benefit of Fox's large travel hoist.

The following morning I was back again to see this in action, with her owner Martin Pollard and his family, as well as Gus and Sarah Curtis of King's with a couple of lads from the yard, as well as a small posse of photographers. It was to be quite a moment. *Selina* was to be returned to British waters, and the Orwell itself, for the first time in almost 60 years.

She was lifted off the trailer and lowered gently into Fox's basin. And almost immediately, from a point on her port bow, a steady stream of water arched itself into the basin. It was probably inevitable after so many years ashore, but it also felt just a bit ominous.

Gus and his lad started doing things aboard, readying her for the tow down to Pin Mill, and Martin and I jumped into my car to drive down the shoreline road, pausing to watch her come through the Orwell Bridge, and again, looking out from the lawns of Royal Harwich Yacht Club, to see her pass by. Once at Pin Mill there's the business of floating her into King's cradle, waiting for the tide to drop, and she's hauled into the yard. *Selina King* is home at last.

Arthur Ransome had originally conceived this boat while in hospital with a hernia in late 1937. She was to be a replacement for *Nancy Blackett*, which, for all her fame as the original of the *Goblin* in his book *We Didn't Mean to Go to Sea*, had always been a stop-gap, a secondhand boat bought immediately on moving into the area in 1935 to enable him to get started on the sea sailing for which he'd moved here from the Lake District. *Nancy* had helped to re-established his status as a yachtsman, first staked in the Baltic in 1921 with *Racundra's First Cruise*, but now he was ready to build again – this time the boat of his dreams.

He'd papered the walls of the hospital room with sketches, though for her actual lines he went to one of the most respected designers of the era, Fred Shepherd. At 35ft (10.7m), she was a lot larger than *Nancy* – a nod to his wife Evgenia's wish for more interior space – and also sleeker and faster, with a 350 sqft (32.5m^2) bermudan sail on a towering 50ft (15.2m) mast.

THE BOOK THAT NEVER WAS

Building began in March 1938 at Harry King's, and Ransome named her as a gesture to the King family, with whom he had become very friendly. He also intended to cement that reputation as a yachting author by writing up the story of her build as a book, and forearmed himself by taking lots of photographs – about 70, all of which have survived as small black-and-white prints. Typical of the day, these are only about the size of cigarette cards, but they contain an impressive amount of information – as we found out when setting up an exhibition in 2017: Anthony Cullen, photographer and owner of the Pin Mill Studio, found he could digitally enlarge a selection of them by 60 times, to 58x38cm – roughly A2 size.

The book never materialised, though Ransome did write a few set-piece descriptions during the build. One covered a visit to the timber yard to select an elm trunk for the keel. A suitable length was found, but when the saw went through, it proved to be rotten inside, and it was immediately chopped up for coffin lids.

He also described with humour her launch in September 1938, where Mrs King got flustered and crashed the champagne bottle against her bows with a desperate cry of "I christen thee *Selina King*."

Once the fitting out was concluded – he got into trouble by 'borrowing' some lead ballast from another customer, Cdr George Martin – Ransome got in a little sailing at the fag-end of the year, and managed to really enjoy getting to know his new boat in the following summer. But then war was declared. All private yachts had to be laid up, including *Selina*, despite an offer by Ransome to lend her to the Admiralty. His last sail in her was up the coast to Lowestoft, by a special licence and with her portholes blacked-out, to be stowed in a boatshed on Oulton Broad.

Previous page: *Selina King*, restored and relaunched, under sail off Pin Mill, September 2024

Above: Arthur Ransome's own photograph of *Selina King* being launched at Pin Mill in 1938

Below: Arthur Ransome sailing *Selina King* in the Walton Backwaters, 1939

Facing page: Under sail on the Orwell, June 2023

PHOTO: JOSEPHINE RUSSELL (NBT ARCHIVES)

SK

And it turned out to have indeed been his last sail. By the time the war was over, his health had deteriorated and his doctor told him that hauling the huge mainsail would be too much for his system. Ransome put *Selina* on the market, rejecting his wife Evgenia's suggestion that the sail and the mast could be cut down. She was sold in February 1946 for £1,600, £200 less than the asking price and some £900 less than the value put on her by Ransome's broker. The buyer was Peter Davies, the publisher of yachting books, who clearly knew a thoroughbred when he saw it: one of his authors was Uffa Fox, who had included *Selina King*'s lines in his 1939 book *Thoughts on Yachts and Yachting*.

Ransome went on to commission a new boat – the down-to-earth *Peter Duck*. He grumpily described this motor-sailer as "a marine bath-chair for my old age" and quickly sold her.

Selina King, meanwhile, passed through several owners. The April 1949 issue of the Little Ship Club's Journal features an article about her then owner, a Mr L London who had remodelled the interior and added a skylight over the saloon.

TO BERMUDA

By 1963, she was owned by a Commander Bluett, whose 'for sale' advert in *Yachting World* caught the attention of her most significant owner apart from Ransome himself.

Hal White was a taxi driver and part-time charter skipper in Bermuda, saving towards buying his own boat. Eventually some regular clients, an American couple, offered to lend him the money to go ahead. He started scanning yachting magazines and quickly discovered, and immediately fell in love with *Selina King*. He flew to London, promptly bought her for £3,500, and arranged for a delivery crew to sail her back to Bermuda – he had to fly back to earn the money to pay them.

Hal chartered her happily for 10 years (guests included Ted Kennedy) before deciding he needed a bigger boat. So *Selina* was sold again, this time to a New Zealander who took her to the British Virgin Islands, but then quickly sold her on to Ross and Diana Doe, who got caught in a hurricane while sailing her back to Bermuda.

Twenty-five years later, in 1997, when Hal was thinking about down scaling, his wife, "my bride Ruth" as he called her, suggested what he wanted was to be reunited with *Selina*: "That's all I needed – the Jack was out of the box." He had kept in touch with *Selina* and a succession of owners for a while after he sold her, but latterly had lost touch with her. He eventually tracked her down to Coconut Grove, Florida, where she proved to be in a distressing, dilapidated condition. Mastless, rotten, paint peeling, seams opening, she had been untouched for several seasons and was being kept afloat by a solar panel and a pump.

"She really was a mess," according to Hal in a long interview for the October 2002 Classic Boat. "She was barely breathing." She had in fact just been sold, but Hal, strengthened by the opinion of a boatbuilding acquaintance – "she's a powerful little vessel, she's well put together and she's got a lot of life in her," – persuaded the new owner that he, Hal, was the one to restore her. So he did, and operated *Selina King* from Hamilton Harbour, Bermuda until the mid-2000s when he decided the time really had come to swallow the anchor.

He phoned me in 2007. His broad Bermudian accent and foghorn voice were by now fairly familiar. "Hey Peter, mah bride Ruth thinks ah should sell *Selina*…" He had had her on the market for some time with no interest, and was offering her to the Nancy Blackett Trust, which I chaired, for just £7,000. We were very tempted (well, I was…), but the difficulties of bringing her across the Atlantic, the open-ended nature of any restoration costs, and the inevitable distraction from our first responsibility of taking care of *Nancy Blackett* all militated against the proposal, and even when Hal offered to give her to us we had to walk away from it, with great regret. In 2008, though,we heard that Hal had succeeded in finding a buyer for *Selina*. Later that same year he was diagnosed with a brain tumour, and passed away on 5 March, 2009.

Selina's new owner was a young Canadian chef called Michael ('Monty') Lamontagne. He had plans to eventually take her through the Panama Canal and up the west coast of America to Vancouver Island. It was a dream destined to remain unfulfilled, defeated by her owner's inexperience combined with the work needed on *Selina*.

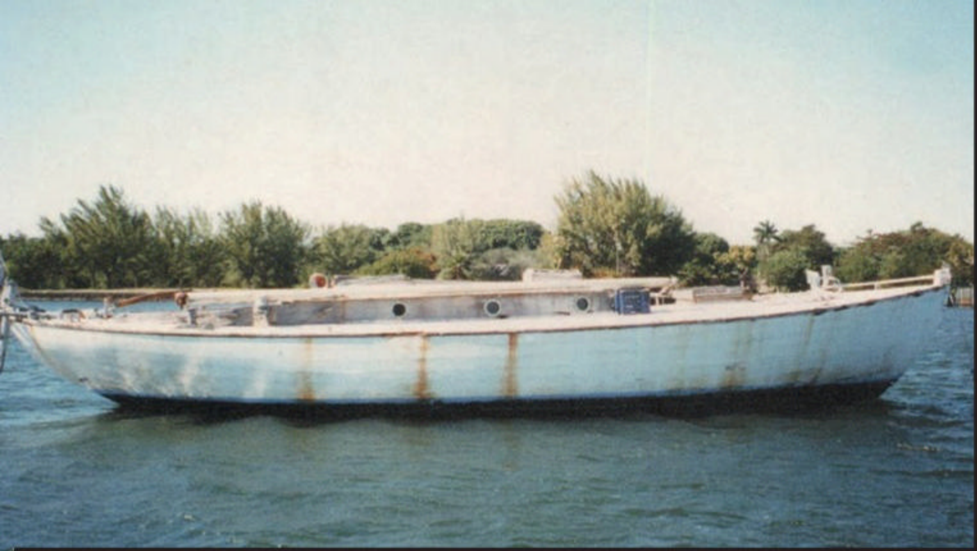
In 2011 I had a phone call from another new owner, Martin Pollard, an English expat and a chartered accountant who had based himself in Bermuda for most of his career. He loved sailing – mostly in multihulls – and had built himself two trimarans. He'd known Hal since soon after he'd arrived in 1963 and had fallen under the spell of *Selina*. "I told Hal then, if you ever want to sell this boat, let me know!"

BARELY AFLOAT AND FULL OF ROT

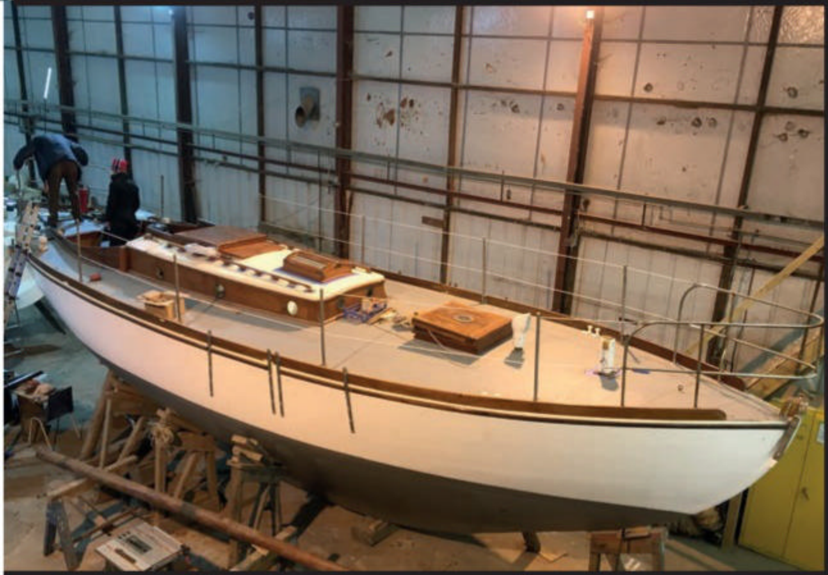
By the time Martin had finally caught up with *Selina* she was, yet again, as he says, "in an appalling mess, barely afloat and full of rot." He paid $9,000 for her and, by then retired, set to work with the help of a capable young shipwright, Bo Chambers, to bring her back to life. "I originally cleared out the mess of the interior including vast amounts of mould etc. I stripped out the complete interior, and arranged stripping the hull to bare planks and moving her to the yard shed. Bo rebuilt all the totally rotten beams holding up the cabin and cockpit, formed and fitted new frames, built and fitted replacement bulkheads and much more to a high standard." Martin describes his own role as a helper – "researching and ordering materials, mixing glue and fibreglass and so on."

In 2015 a hurricane brought an asbestos shed roof down on *Selina*. The site was closed down by the government and it took over a year to clear it up and get back to work.

By 2017, Martin had more or less permanently moved back to the UK, but *Selina* was still in Bermuda – transport off the island had always been problematic. Luckily though, he managed to book space on the yacht transporter ship bringing Britain's America's



HARRY KING & SONS

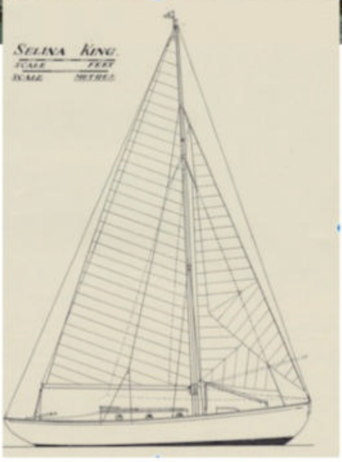


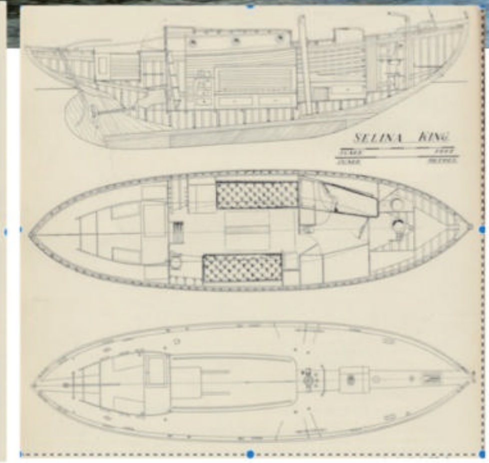
Selina King
WINDWARD

Clockwise from top left: Selina King 'barely breathing' when Hal White rediscovered her in 1997; Returning to King's Pin Mill yard in 2022; Relaunched view from the cockpit 2023; Interior; Afterdeck; Owner Martin Pollard at the helm in 2023; (centre) view from the restored cockpit; Under Martin's restoration in Chichester in 2021

SELINA KING

DESIGN	Fred Shepherd
BUILD	King & Sons, 1938
LOA	35ft 6in (10.8m)
LWS	28ft 4in (8.6m)
BEAM	10ft (3.1m)
DRAUGHT	5ft (1.5m)
DISP	10.3 tonnes
SAIL AREA	562sqft (52.2m^2)





Cup fleet home. He moved *Selina* into a workshop at Northshore Yachts in Itchenor, on Chichester Harbour, not far from his home, and got to work.

Martin liked to work on *Selina* himself, bringing in skilled help as needed on each part of the restoration."I got the help I could, when I could – I worked with all sorts of fabulous people."

REPLACING THE MAST

Doing it this way took time, not helped by the covid lockdown, but all went well until he came to the mast. *Selina* had arrived with what was, in effect, a short aluminium jury mast. She needed a replacement for the original 50ft (15.2m) wooden mast. Martin had already been in touch with Gus Curtis at Kings in Pin Mill for expert advice. "Nothing with Gus is a problem. 'I'll build it' he said promptly."

He did, and it is a thing of beauty, but there was a problem, and it was how to bring the boat and mast together. Transporting a 50ft mast by road is a lot more difficult than delivering a 35ft hull. In the end, the obvious solution prevailed. *Selina* and her mast were united in the yard where she had been born. There was a celebration dinner at the Butt and Oyster and *Selina* was installed in King's yard for the winter.

Inevitably, she had arrived with a snagging list. With a project of this complexity, undertaken over several years by various skilled shipwrights, and in some aspects still unfinished, things could hardly have been otherwise. Martin was, however, specially pleased that Gus was impressed by the installation of the Yanmar engine by marine engineer Dick Woodruff of Birdham Marine. King's took matters in hand and by the summer of 2023 *Selina* was ready to be relaunched, briefly, to coincide with a Nancy Blackett Trust event at Royal Harwich Yacht Club, and to give Martin, his family and friends a chance to enjoy sailing her and get some photographs. Martin was delighted with her performance, and her appearance, but there were still some jobs to catch up on and she returned to the yard for another winter, and further treatment.

It's now September 2024, almost exactly two years after I first saw the then mostly-restored *Selina*. We pick a day to get some sailing photos – the weather is turning equinoctial and *Selina* has a reef in. She neverthelesss performs splendidly, carving purposefully through the waters off Pin Mill and displaying the elegance of her thoroughbred hull.

But it's not Martin at the helm, or aboard her at all. With advancing years, he is no longer in fit condition to sail her, and, rather like a replay of an old movie, he, like Ransome 78 years ago, is having to reconcile himself to relinquishing the joy of owning and sailing this beautiful, characterful and, now, historic yacht. He has had the satisfaction of bringing her, literally, back to life but now he knows he must seek a new, proud owner, little though he likes the idea.

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VOILES DE SAINT-TROPEZ

Happy 25th, Voiles

WORDS RON VALENT **PHOTOS** GILLES MARTIN-RAGET

The 25th Voiles de Saint-Tropez at the beginning of October had to be celebrated in style and the week was a succession of conviviality with ideal weather almost daily on the water and a lot of fun ashore in the evenings.

The event itself is much older than the 25 years now celebrated. In 1981, the first Nioulargue Regatta was held with a race between the Swan yacht *Pride* and the 12 Metre yacht *Ikra*. The course was from Saint-Tropez to the Nioulargue buoy then back to Pampelonne Beach, where the loser treated the winner to a late lunch. In the following years, La Nioulargue grew into the spectacular season finale it is today and where, in the spirit of the original challenge, the finest classics can be seen together with a similar number of the most modern racing yachts.

After the fatal accident in 1995 between the 6-M *Taos Brett* and the gaff schooner *Mariette*, the name was changed to Les Voiles de Saint-Tropez and from 1999 the event was back on the calendar.

The classics sail in a wide range of classes from pretty gaff cutters of 20ft (6m) or so, to the mighty 180ft (54.8m) LOS schooner *Elena*. As every year, Ed Kastelein's even larger 227ft (69m) LOS *Atlantic* sails a few rounds through the bay of Saint-Tropez. Quite a few 12-Ms had stayed on from the class' world championship in Porquerolles, so there were eleven 12-Ms, eight of them classics, that delivered some spectacular racing. The eventual class winner was Sir Richard Matthews' *Crusader*.

Winner in the Big Boats class was the 15-M *Tuiga*. Winner in this year's very competitive Gaff class was the 10-M *Marga*. A class within this class were the four P-Class yachts: *Olympian, Chips, Joyant* and *Corinthian*.

The bermudan yachts were divided into two classes of 16 boats each. *Blitzen,* a 1938 S&S sloop, won the EMA class while the famous *Stormy Weather*, also an S&S but a 1934 yawl, won the EMB class. Every year more boats join these groups and the competition is increasingly fierce and, to the chagrin of some 'gentleman' owners, increasingly professional.

The Invitation Class for small yachts was won convincingly by the diminutive Solent Sunbeam *Dainty*, a regular attendee.

The 1929 Fife ketch *Belle Aventure* won the GTR class that further consisted of six large schooners: the gaff-rigged *Orianda, Naema, Puritan, Sunshine* and *Elena of London* and the staysail schooner *Asschanti IV. Elena* broke a spreader on day one, allowing most of her 46 crew to be divided among the other yachts for the rest of the week.

Altogether, the 80 classics made for an incredibly beautiful week of spectacular racing in sometimes challenging conditions. Despite the pricey drinks at the bar (a rum and coke in the Sube will put you back €20), Voiles remains a must-see for any classic enthusiast.

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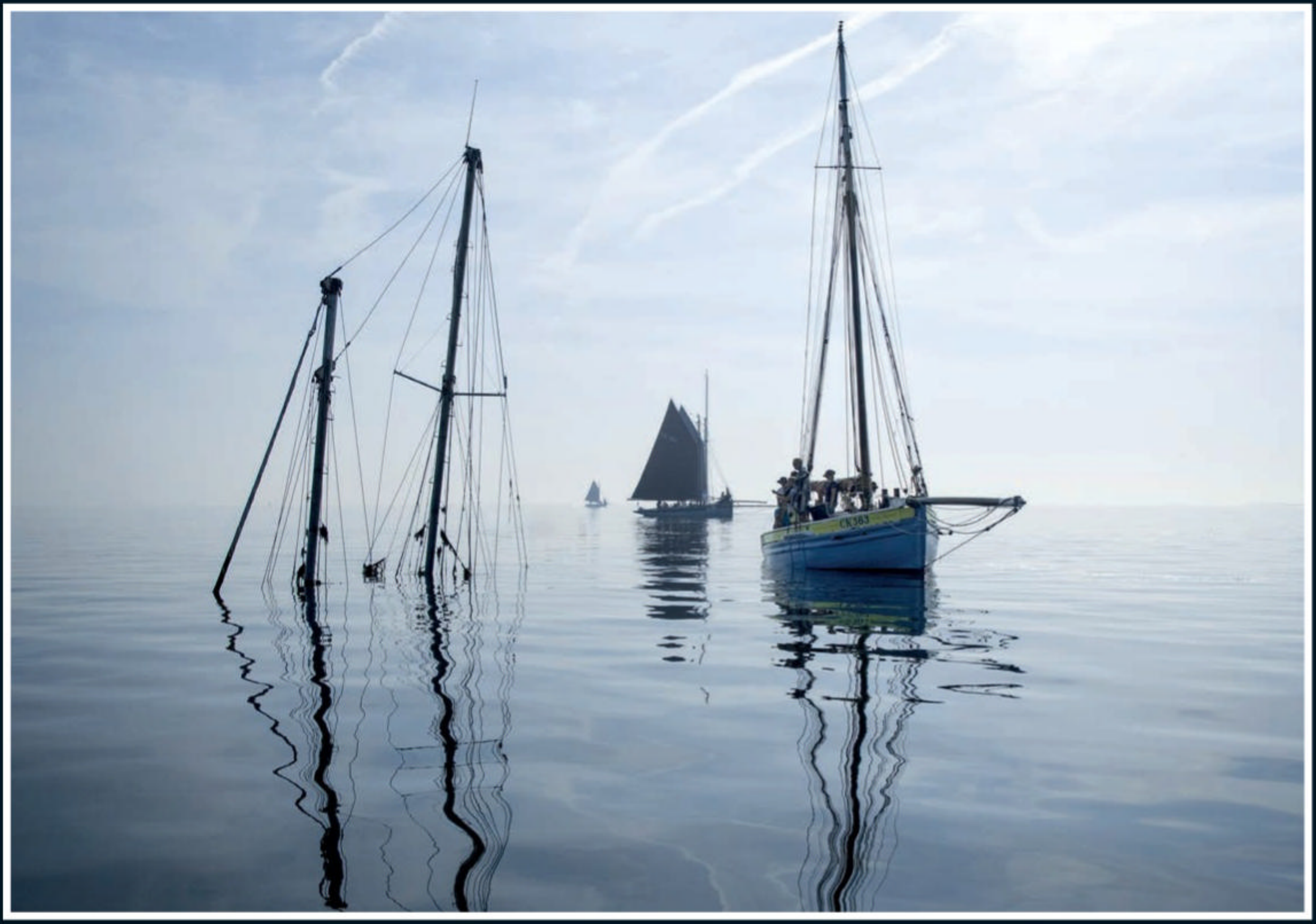
1 Gaff yawl *Sky* from 1890 relishing the heavy weather
2 Solent Sunbeam *Dainty*, winner of the Invitation Class
3 Bowman on the Monaco Yachtclub's 15 Metre *Tuiga*
4 Punishment or pleasure. Daily job for crew on the 12-Metre *Seven Seas*. The not-so-glamorous side of crewing on a classic
5 Crew from the P-Class yachts *Chips* and *Corinthian* discussing the results
6 The Liljegren-designed 10-Metre *Marga* from 1910. Winner of the Gaff Class
7 The Johan Anker-designed 8-Metre *Apache* from 1918
8 Sir Richard Matthews' 12-Metre *Crusader*. Class winner
9 Close quarters at the gybe mark
10 *Tern*, 1897 Belfast Lough One Design by Fife and built by John Hilditch
11 Skipper Charlotte Franquet in her element on Pete Townsend's *Serenade*
12 All hands lowering sail on the bowsprit of *Elena*
13 *Tern*, details as in photo 10

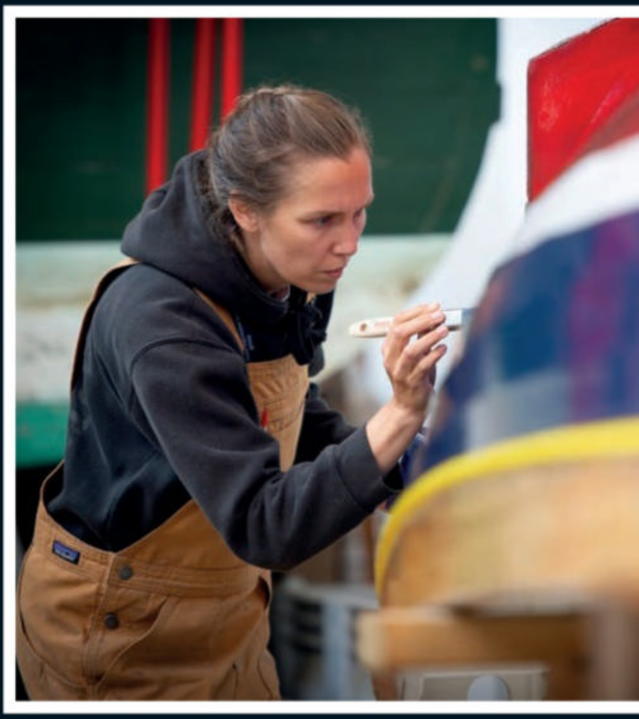


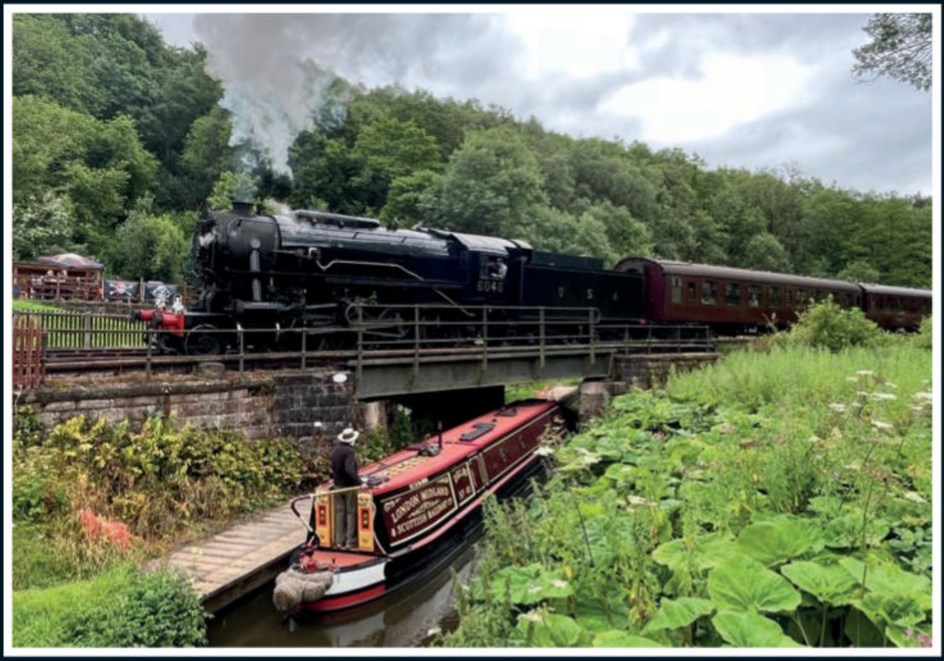
CLASSIC BOAT WINNER **A Sinking Feeling, featuring *Mayfly* and *Dorothy***
By Chrissie Westgate from West Mersea

PHOTOGRAPHY COMPETITION WINNERS

The National Historic Ships UK photography competition, run annually in partnership with Classic Boat, attracted many strong images.
Here are the winners

TRUE COLOURS OVERALL WININER
Painting Trafalgar
By Peter Collins from Portsmouth





PEOPLE'S CHOICE WINNER

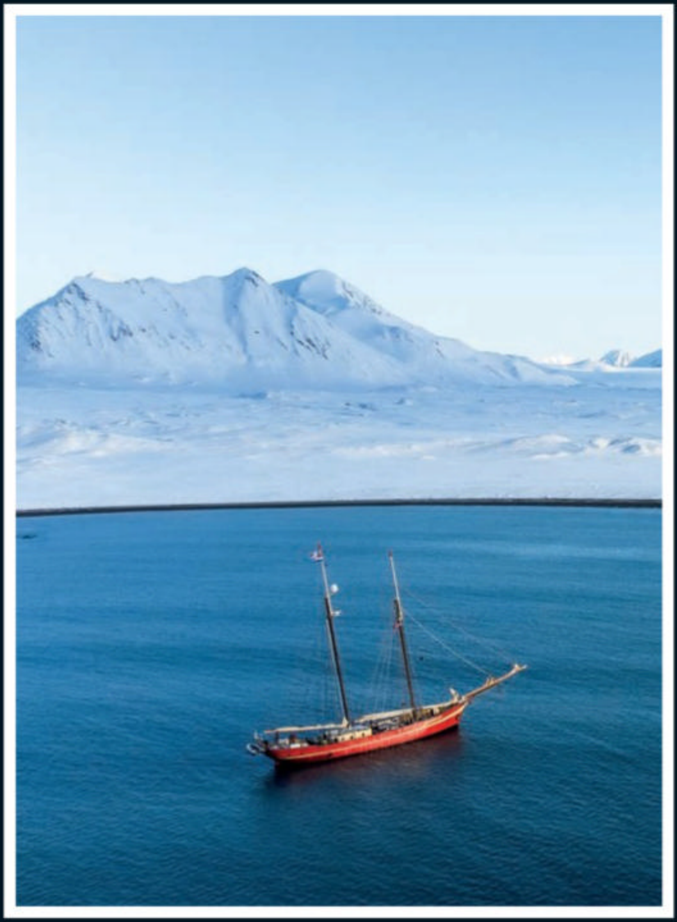
True LMS Locomotive Colours

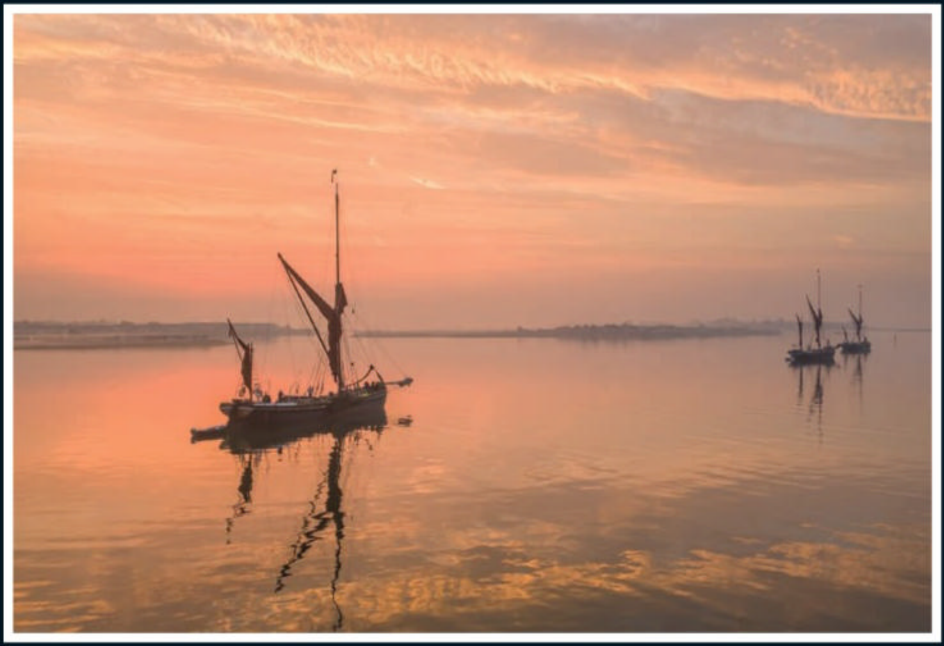
by Julie Fletcher from Llandeilo

NEWCOMER AWARD WINNER

A White World

By Amy Lawson from Perth, Western Australia





CLASSIC BOAT HIGHLY COMMENDED

Pudge *By Shaun Mills from West Mersea*

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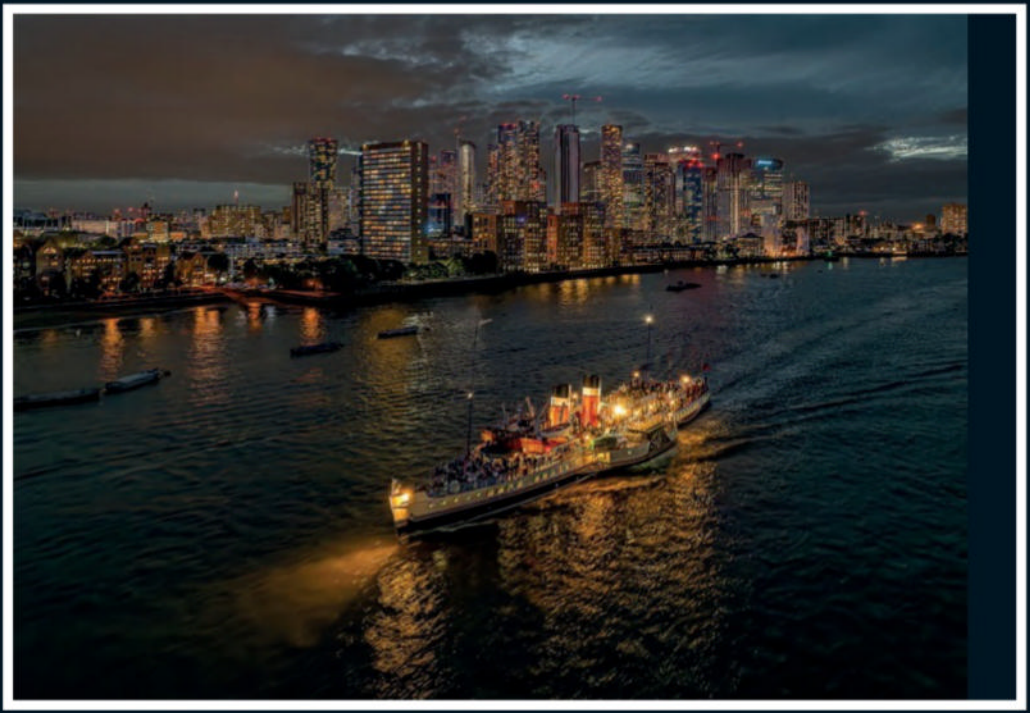

TRUE COLOURS HIGHLY COMMENDED

Old & New – Waverley at Canary Wharf,

By Mark Dillen from Gravesend

Follow the Classic Boat team on Twitter and Facebook

PHOTO: DANIEL FORSTER/AMERICA'S CUP HALL OF FAME

America's Cup hero awards

The America's Cup Hall of Fame always throws a good party but what makes the inductions special is the reunion of Cup legends who come together to celebrate the Cup's past, present and future. With the support of L'Oreal, Barcelona's Museu Maritim de Barcelona was the stunning venue and guests dined under the gilded transom of the replica of John of Austria's Royal Galley, after drinks in the presence of the Cup itself.

The 1977 wining tactician and Hall of Fame member Gary Jobson was master of ceremonies and the host was the Herreshoff Maritime Museum home of the Hall of Fame. Cup guru and chairman of the Hall of Fame Selection Committee, Steve Tsuchiya, welcomed us before the proceedings got underway with a record number of honourees.

Four inductees were honoured during the evening starting with Josh Belsky, a Whitbread race winner with a sailing CV that would impress without any Cup sailing: Belsky has sailed in five Cups and with *America3* and *Alinghi*, won three times. He is a great sailor and an effective communicator between crew, designers and builders, whose quiet manner is held in great esteem.

The Hall of Fame is not just about sailors, syndicate leaders and yacht designers; it also honours the chroniclers of the Cup. The late Bob Fisher was a fixture of the Cup press from 1970 until his death in 2021. He was a commentator, broadcaster and an incredibly prolific author who wrote seven books about the Cup. A great character of the Cup, he was represented by his wife Dee and daughters Alice and Carolyne.

Honouree Juan Villa is a veteran of 10 Cup cycles from 1992 to this year's contest in his hometown. A navigator in the Spanish challenges of 1992, 1995 and 2000, Villa was snapped up by *Alinghi* when Spain ceased competing. With *Alinghi* he was part of the winning teams in 2003 and 2007 before joining *Oracle Team USA* for the successful 2013 and 2017 campaigns. He followed this with stint with *Ineos Team UK* in 2021, but this year was back with *Alinghi*. Away from the Cup he has raced round the world five times and was in the winning crew of *Banque Populaire V* for the successful 2012 Jules Verne Trophy attempt.

Kevin Shoebridge was honoured even before *Emirates Team New Zealand's* victory in the 37th America's Cup, his 10th Cup campaign. His involvement stems back to the 1986 and the *Kiwi Magic* challenge of the following year. Since 2003 he has held a senior management position in *Emirates Team New Zealand* developing the foiling multihulls and then transitioning to today's foiling monohulls for the 2021 Cup. He continues to lead one of the most successful teams in Cup history.

Back in 1885 when Sir Richard Sutton challenged for the Cup with *Genesta* he was fouled at the start. The race committee awarded him a sail over for which he thanked them but added "we don't want to win in that way. We want a race not a walkover." That spirit of friendly competition is recognised by the Sutton Medal awarded to "persons or entities that have exemplified that spirit."

This year it went to Vicenzo 'Cino' Ricci, godfather of Italian America's Cup sailing. From skippering and project managing his country's first Cup challenge with *Azzura* in 1983, Cino has inspired his countrymen in a pursuit of the Cup includes the long-term *Il Moro di Venezia* and *Prada Luna Rosa* campaigns. Today it is hard to imagine the Cup without the Italians and for that Cino Ricci's incredible contribution was recognised.

Louis Vuitton, sponsor of the selection series since 1983 and this year also of the Cup itself, have invested over 40 years in making the Cup what it is today. They are much more than just sponsors, and for this, the venerable firm was thanked and honoured.

William Collier

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Women outnumber men at boatbuilding course

For the first time in its 28-year history, the Boat Building Academy (BBA) in Lyme Regis, Dorset, has enrolled more woman than men in its flagship 40-week course: the newest student intake comprises eight women and seven men. The most women enrolled previously was four, and for two years there were no female students at all. Diversity in boatbuilding has long been a concern, say the BBA, and the rise in female applicants is the result of a far-reaching diversity and inclusivity mission launched just over a year ago by the BBA and Belinda Joslin, founder of Women in Boatbuilding (WIBB). The multi-faceted strategy puts diversity at the heart of the academy's priorities from the top down, and includes practical and financial support. A five-day Women's Workshop course now runs annually for women to try their hand at woodworking before committing to further study. A new bursary scheme exclusively for women is making it possible for a growing number of women to meet the cost of the course. In addition, WIBB members already working in the industry are also actively mentoring female BBA students.

Student Sophia Harding from Portsmouth is just 17. Determined to enter a 'practical' career she dropped out of sixth form, taught herself to sail and bought an old boat, which she singlehandedly restored last winter. The BBA's new women's bursary scheme has now enabled her to join the 40-week course, partly enabled by a 50 per cent bursary. During the summer I worked for Urban Truant, a charter boat company, where I saved every penny towards the outstanding fees. They also sponsored a portion of the fees and, in addition, I gained sponsorship from the William Price Trust.

Student Hannah Lovett, 38, and from Calderdale in West Yorkshire, has come to the BBA after leaving her career as a restaurateur. She said: "I knew that working with my hands was the only way I wanted to work, and I was initially thinking joinery. But one day a friend who works with boats sent me a link to Women in Boat Building which I found completely inspiring. A couple of weeks later, I woke up at 3am, sat bolt upright in bed and knew that's what I should do."

HSC sold to Dennetts

The Henley Sales and Charter (HSC) brokerage, founded (as Hambleden Sales and Charter) by Gillian Nahum in 1992, has been sold to Heather and Stephen Dennett, better known for their boatyard in nearby Chertsey. Dennetts is now something of a one-stop-shop, with the HSC's extensive barn storage and office in Beale Park and, of course, the nearby boatyard. HSC has sold and imported boats internationally, as well as locally, over the years, with transactions in far-flung places like the USA, Jordan, Botswana, Italy, the Netherlands, France and more. Gillian (on the right in the photo) already has a long-standing relationship with the Dennetts: her boat *New Venture* was restored at the yard, a restoration that won a Transport Trust award. Gillian will stay on at HSC in a consultative role for the foreseeable future, while she works on her other strands mentoring women in business and continuing with her other business, Pure Boats, specialists in electrifying boats.

Bernard Gallay
Yacht Brokerage

SALE, CHARTER & MANAGEMENT
Also specialises in Transoceanic Charter

212^{ft} New Classic Schooner
ATLANTIC

2010. **Replica of the legendary ATLANTIC which was commissioned by New York Yacht Club member Wilson Marshall and which was launched in 1903.** After owning, restoring, rebuilding and recreating a number of famous yachts, her owner built her with his vast experience, and has once again constructed a yacht that no-one thought would ever sail again. Her original lines were honoured to the finest detail, and her sail plan is identical to that of her victorious 1905 Transatlantic Race. Above all, she is again breathtakingly beautiful, turning heads wherever the wind takes her.

Her dimensions are simply incredible. Thanks to her spars, which support a staggering area of 1,750 m^2 of sail, she performs at unmatched speeds under sail.

97ft Alan Buchanan Ketch TELSTAR VI

1968. Rebuilt 2019. TELSTAR VI is a classically designed, auxiliary ketch with all the character and style of the 1960's, but the luxurious comfort, amenities and advantages of a modern yacht. Her strength and long range will provide endless enjoyment for local and world cruising. TELSTAR VI is carvel built of mahogany and oak. She underwent a substantial €13 Million refit in Malta from 2012 to 2019 where she was completely stripped out. Her all-new equipment also includes carbon spars. The extensive refit enables MCA coding.

90^{ft} New Classic Hoek Design ATALANTE

2009. Refit 2023. Built by Holland Jachtbouw, ATALANTE has proven to be an excellent family cruising yacht in all destinations, combining a spacious interior and exterior layout with performance. Participating in various regattas, she was winner of the Hoek Design Cup in 2012 & 2013. She also achieved second place overall in the Palma Superyacht Cup in 2013. The interiors are extensive with alfresco living areas, with the central cockpit serving as a social centre for guests and the aft cockpit for sailing functions.

84^{ft} WINDWEAVER OF PENNINGTON

1998. Refit 2021. WINDWEAVER OF PENNINGTON is a solid, seaworthy, go-anywhere sailing yacht rigged as a ketch. She has a huge range including under engine with 2,500 NM to go at 8 knots cruising. Inside, she has a lovely, cosy interior which allows her to face all sort of weathers and climates. She can accommodate up to 8 guests and 3 crew.

Classic 8 MJI SILK

1947. Refit 2023. SILK is one of the rare 8 MJI built in France. She was the winner of the Royal Regatta in 1949 and a micro in 1951. SILK has been restored according to the original plans found in the Musée de la Marine in Paris. She is in excellent ready to race condition.

80^{ft} Long Range Gentleman's Yacht THEMARA

1962. Refit 2022. Designed by the Scottish naval architects G.L. Watson & Co. and built along traditional lines to Lloyds class by Ailsa Shipbuilding, Scotland. She has a top speed of 11 knots and boasts a maximum range of 4,000 NM, thanks to her twin Gardner engines. She has cruised extensively in all latitudes including a circumnavigation. She was also a support vessel for the filming of Luc Besson's Atlantis. Her interior has been rebuilt using varnished mahogany, in a timeless style, with modern details for comfort.

Classic 20 DOLCE VITA

2004. Refit 2022. The hull and superstructure are made of wood, mixing traditional construction and design with the latest techniques. She truly resembles the timeless elegance of more traditional classic yachts. DOLCE VITA has been designed with enjoying comfortable holidays in mind, sailing peacefully, easily and safely. Her fuel range stretches to further extended coastal trips.

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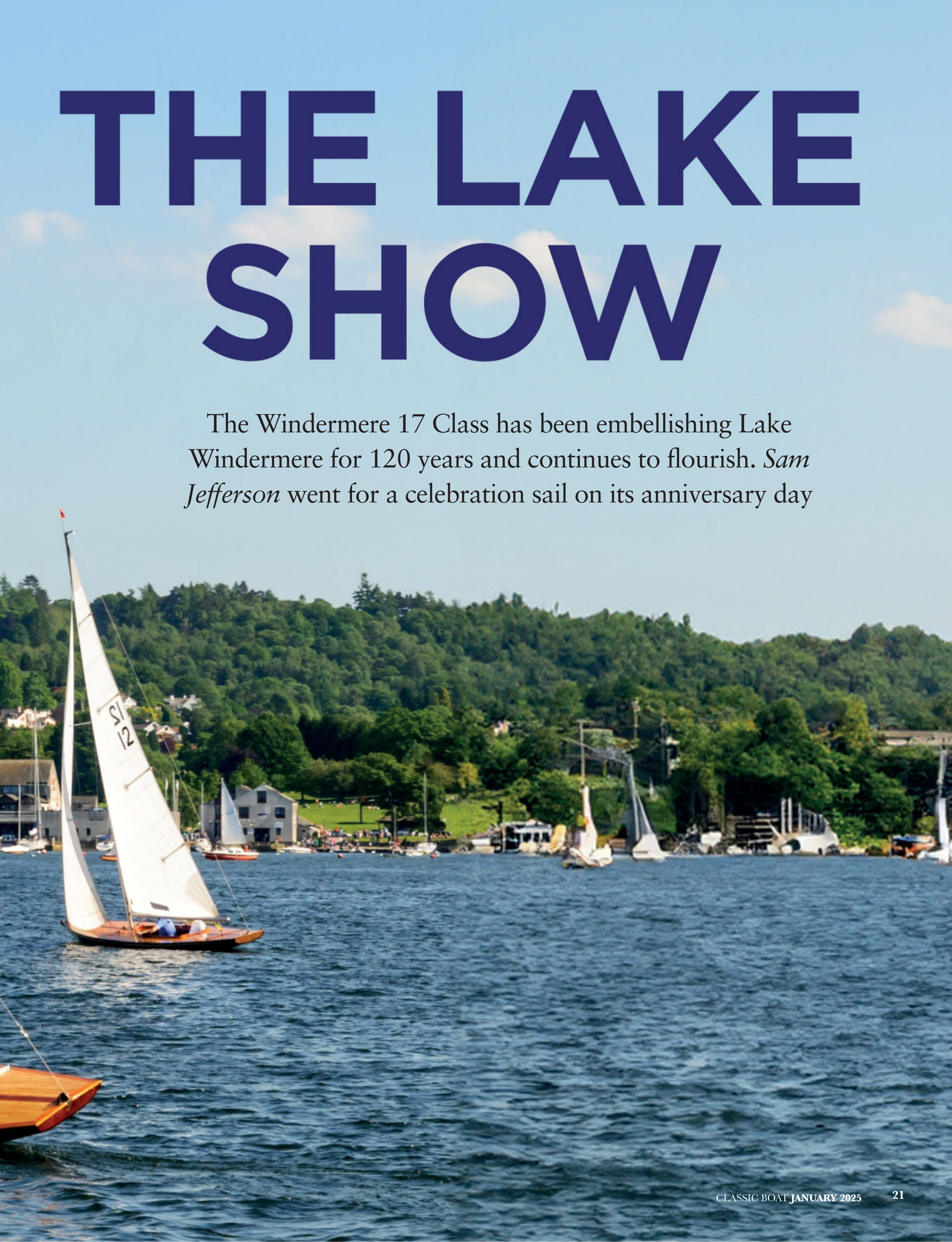
MYBA

36
4

THE LAKE SHOW

The Windermere 17 Class has been embellishing Lake Windermere for 120 years and continues to flourish. *Sam Jefferson* went for a celebration sail on its anniversary day



Left: All quiet as the sun goes down

Above right: The verdant hills of the Lake District provide a remarkable backdrop to races

Below left: Flying Duckman, the newest boat in the fleet

Below right Colin Bentley and John Richardson's *Liberty* preparing for the sail past

Opposite page bottom right: Merlin, the oldest boat in the fleet

Since the era of William Wordsworth and Samuel Taylor Coleridge, the natural beauty of the Lake District has prompted many to wax lyrical. The blend of verdant hills, rugged crags and fast flowing streams plunging down the hillsides into the dark profundity of the lakes has inspired many. There are few things in this world that can embellish this bucolic idyll but it's fair to say that the sight of the Windermere 17 fleet in full flight, skimming across the lake, varnished hulls glistening and white sails aglow accentuate the natural beauty of the place in a way that few man made objects can do.

The Windermere 17 class celebrated its 120th anniversary this year and is remarkable in the fact that it is not only one of the oldest classes in the world, but also a real rarity in that modern boats race against bona fide classics, and competition remains fierce. The class history dates back to 1904 when Royal Windermere Yacht Club (RWYC) commissioned the new class as a smaller alternative to existing racing classes already on the water.

PHOTOS: DAVID HERON

The RWYC itself has a long and fascinating history, having been founded in 1860. The club is based in the lakeside town of Bowness on Windermere and was not set up by locals but by wealthy industrialists – mostly from neighbouring Lancashire and Yorkshire where their dark satanic mills had helped Britain become an industrial powerhouse. At weekends, these industrialists were ready for a little rest and recuperation, and yacht sailing was becoming de rigueur. The early classes of yachts were often crewed by professional sailors from Morecambe Bay who fished for most of the year and decamped to the Lakes for the summer racing season. Interest in the sailing was further amplified as there was no racecourse nearby and betting on the sailing was a useful alternative to betting on the horses. To this day, race results for the 17s are hoisted on a flagstaff (each boat having its own flag) at the end of every day for the benefit of those who have had a flutter on the race.

A DIFFERENT CLASS

Initially, bigger classes dominated but by 1904 demand was growing among monied sailors to dispense with paid crew and helm their own boats. This meant the demands for a smaller class was growing and the 17' restricted class was introduced (see box on p26 for class rules).

The early boats were mostly designed by Percy Crossley, although it was his cousin Herbert who designed hull number 1, *Naiad*. Percy Crossley was the son of Halifax businessman Louis John Crossley, who was a founding

member of the RWYC. Percy learnt the trade of yacht design by working with designer Linton Hope, known for designing the Thames Raters among others. The original boats had a high peaked gaff which can still be seen on the 1908 built 17, *Merlin*. In 1929, this was changed to the Bermudan rig we see today.

Racing proved keen and the simplicity of the yachts helped. You could not reef them, and spinnakers were not permitted which kept things simple. Since 1904 the class has flourished and many notable designers have turned their hand to a Windermere 17.

AMERICA'S CUP INFLUENCE

Over the years there has been a clear link with the 12-M class, which contested the America's Cup post war right up to 1987, and operated under similar design restrictions. Designers such as David Boyd, who designed the 1958 America's Cup challenger *Sceptre* turned his hand to designing a number of 17s. The legendary Olin Stephens designed the 17 Sailfish II in 1967, which shared many features with the revolutionary America's Cup winner *Intrepid*. Latterly, the designer Ian Howlett turned his hand to designing a new generation of 17s which clearly showed the influence of his work on the *Lionheart* and *Victory '83* America's Cup challenges. Howlett also designed the most recent 17, *Flying Duckman*, which was launched in 2013. Aside from these America's Cup icons, other legendary designers such as Alfred Mylne, Uffa Fox, and Arthur Robb

Owning a Windermere 17

Owning a classic yacht is always an undertaking but the 17s have certain advantages over some other classic classes:

Price
This obviously varies depending on the state of the boat, sails etc but a Windermere 17 ready to sail can be picked up for around £7,000. The prices are generally kept reasonable because they are only raced on Windermere so have a specific niche

Maintenance
This also depends on the vintage of the boat. The older boats obviously need more care while *Tripple*, the only glassfibre hulled boat is currently being restored. The Howlett designs are epoxy glass-skinned cedar-cored boats and require the least amount of maintenance.

Storage
During the summer, the yachts ride on moorings in the Lake. In the winter they are best kept in storage and there are plenty of Lake District farmers willing to rent out barn space.

Useful contacts
Website: royal-windermere.co.uk
Email: 17ftfleet.rwyc@gmail.com

Class rules

First Built 1904
DesignVarious
LOA Up to 25ft 6in (7.7m)
LWL 17ft (5.2m)
Beam Minimum 5ft 10in (1.8m)
Draught 4ft (1.2m)
Sail area Max 300 sqft (27.9m^2)
Mainsail Minimu 190 sqft (17.7m^2)
Hull weight 345kg

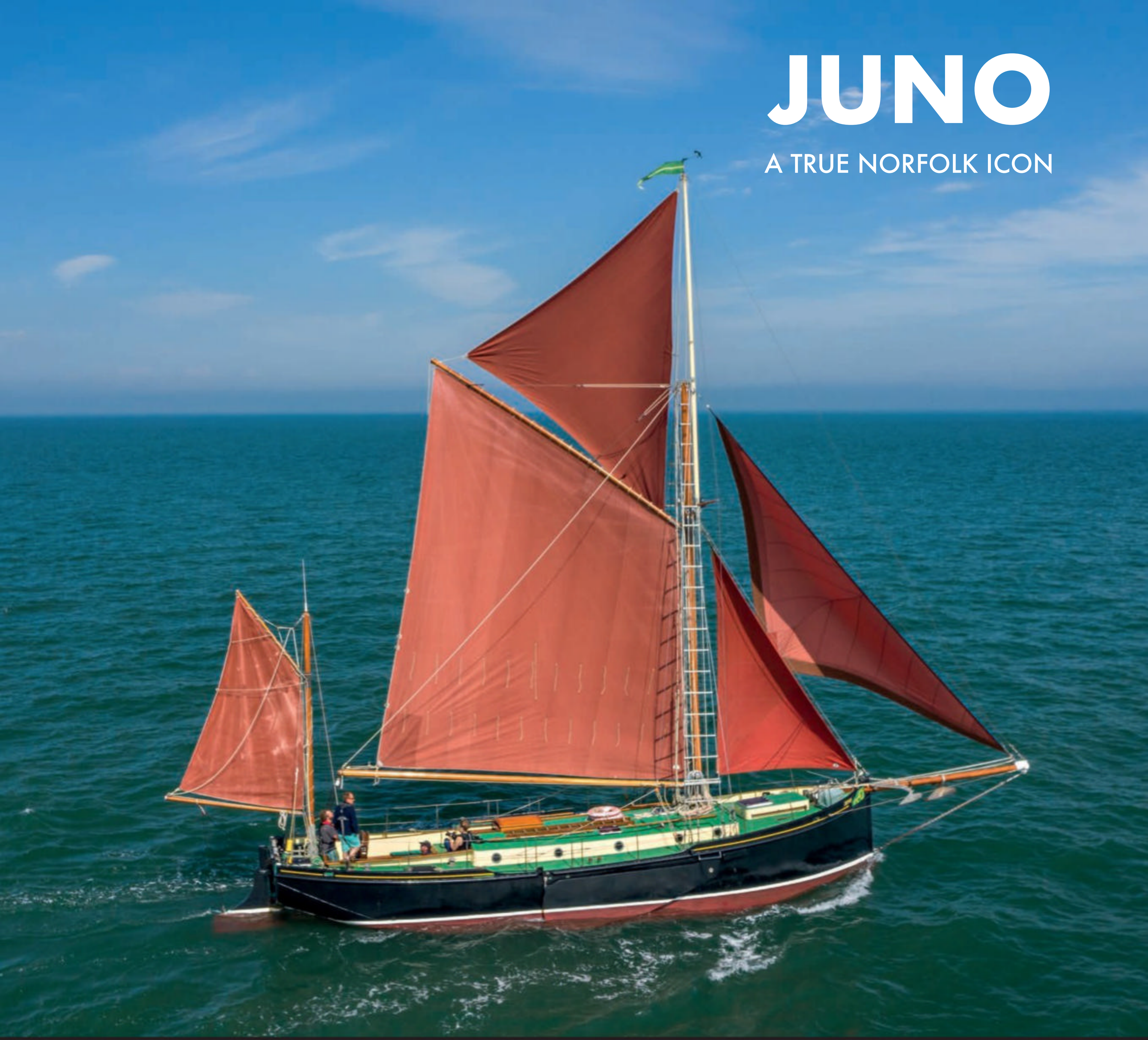
Above: Boats lining up in numerical order for the start of the sail past

all tried their hand at a 17. All this means that there is very clear variation in hull shape, with certain boats optimised for light winds and others having an edge when the wind fills in. Given the extremely varied conditions on Windermere, it is therefore understandable that the racing remains extremely close within the fleet despite the variations in age and hull form. To further improve competitiveness, the club has also introduced different prizes for the different generations of yacht.

SAILING THE WINDERMERE 17

I was invited out to sail the 120th anniversary sail past and the race that ensued. I was sailing aboard Colin Bentley and John Richardson's *Liberty*, one of Ian Howlett's earlier designs and a boat that performs best in fresh winds. Unfortunately there was rarely more than 8kts but all the boats are narrow with a big sail area and are well capable of ghosting along in such conditions. The sail past created some challenges because the boats were meant to sail in order of sail number, which is somewhat like herding cats. It didn't help that *Merlin*, sail number 1 and the oldest boat in the fleet, dating back to 1908, was also the slowest boat due to her gaff rig. Nevertheless, the fleet presented a splendid sight as they slipped past the clubhouse and up the western end of the lake. The weather was grey but the majestic backdrop of the great verdant hills, the islands and the dark waters of the lake itself were all breathtaking.

Following the sail past, I took the helm and got a feel for the boat. The 17s have an open cockpit, and hiking out is forbidden so you are low in the boat. The helm on *Liberty* felt extremely well balanced and the boat was very forgiving, tracking well and carrying her way through the tacks with ease. *Liberty* may be noted for performing better in strong breezes but she proved no slouch in the light airs either. After all, these boats are all about fine margins. It is easy to see that you could also use a 17 as a comfortable day boat for cruising the lake, provided you don't try to cram too many people into it. The lack of a spinnaker meant that downwind the mainsail did most of the work, although you are allowed to use a whisker pole to goosewing the headsail. Given that conditions on the lake can get wild and you can't reef a 17, some care must be taken. The boats have a generous ballast ratio but they do ship water in strong winds. A record of just four sinkings in 120 years suggests a good level of lakeworthiness. There was never going to be much bailing on the day I was sailing but there was a decent amount of breeze as we lined up for the start of the race. I was now crewing for John Richardson, Club Commodore, so I was on my mettle. We endured an appalling start, getting squeezed out at the pin end and having to circle round and have a second go. Lake sailing is, however, all about reading the shifts that funnel and fluctuate as they come down the valleys. John obviously knew what to look for and we accompanied *Deva* out to the starboard side of the course where there was clearly a touch more wind. We soon found ourselves in fifth and there we stayed as the wind died almost completely and the course was shortened. The eventual winner was Richard Thompson's *Capella*, dating from 1962, which led the way from Ed and Simon Grey's *Flying Duckman* – the newest boat in the fleet. Earlier Thompson had said that his boat was at a distinct disadvantage in light airs – which demonstrated, if nothing else, the capricious nature of lake sailing and the competitiveness of the fleet.



NEW ON THE MARKET
FOR SALE

This 45ft Steel Thames Barge Replica, professionally built and fit out by Charlie Ward Traditional Boats in 2000, and moored in Blakeney, is instantly recognizable to those who live, sail and visit the North Norfolk Coast.

She has been removed from the water annually since her launch in 2000 and serviced by Charlie Ward. She has recently been professionally restored by Neil Thompson Boats, where she is currently dry stored.

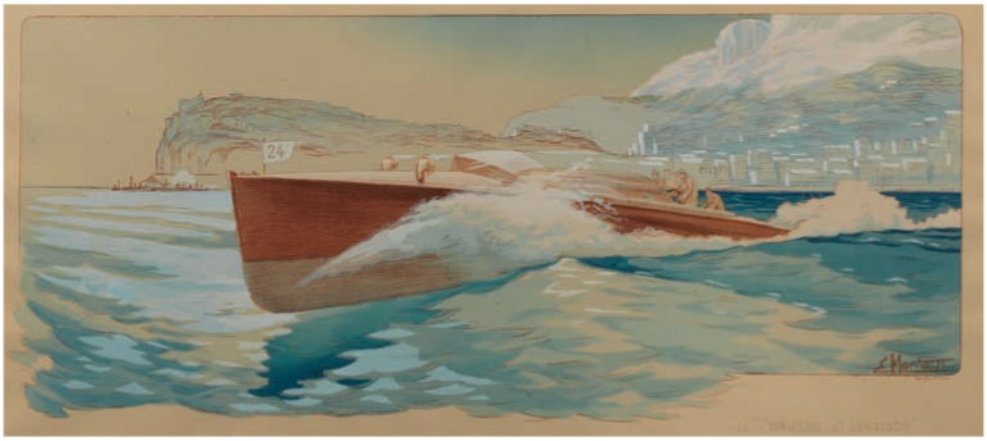
Juno has an impressive inventory, will be sold having had a survey, and has been MCA coded for use as both a private pleasure and commercial charter boat.

To view a 3D virtual tour of the boat please visit
www.sailingbargejuno.com/gallery

For more information on this impressive vessel
please contact **Richenda@neilthompsonboats.co.uk**

Saleroom

BY DAVE SELBY



BONHAMS

BONHAMS

Cartoon capers at Monaco

Photos show that Panhard-Levassor race boats were just as dramatic in life as in art

Comic book art from Superman to Dan Dare owes a lot to pioneering French illustrator Ernest Montaut (1878-1909), whose renderings of early automobile racing exaggerated form, distorted perspective and added "speed line" flourishes to create the impression of wild and hedonistic break-neck velocity. But when it came to illustrating the remarkable 1908 Monaco powerboat race he had little need to exaggerate, as the contenders – and events that unfolded – were even more cartoonish than comic book fantasies.

In the blue-riband 200km race, the British Wolseley-Siddeley broke down on the start-line, the Italian entry didn't even make it that far as it had already caught fire and sunk (well, it was a Fiat), and one of the French contenders had earlier sliced a spectator boat in two. The other French entry, the Panhard-Levassor depicted in this lithograph (left), was an extravagant 49. ft-long (15m) hydroplane powered by four, four-cylinder 120hp engines. It was crowned Champion of The Seas after covering the 200km in 3hrs 45min at an average speed of 33mph (53kph) – remember, this is 1908! Moreover, on its way to victory two of the three crew had passed out from engine fumes.

When comparing this hand-finished 1908 lithograph (sold for £410) with photos of the period it's clear that for once Montaut had little need to exaggerate.

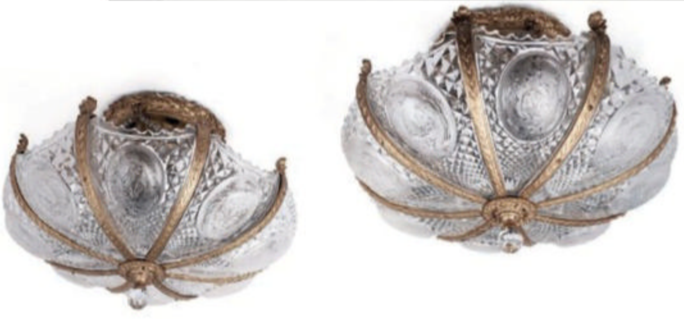
ANDERSON & GARLAND

Olympic illuminations

ANDERSON & GARLAND

While the *RMS Titanic* and all her splendours have lain at the bottom of the Atlantic since that fateful day in 1912, her sister ship, *Olympic*, steamed through war and peace to cover 1.8 million miles until she was broken up in Jarrow in 1937 and her opulent fittings sold off at auction to furnish hotels, grand homes, the canteen of paint factory, and more recently an Olympic-themed restaurant on a modern cruise liner.

However, these ornate ormolu and cut-glass ceiling lights from the first class lounge travelled a mere 20 miles to Durham where they were recently discovered lighting up an ordinary family home. They also lit up the saleroom, selling for £28,750 against an estimate of £4,000-6,000.



Olympic **ceiling lights (left) give a glimpse of the opulence of her tragic sister; along with everything removable, the grand stair case and panelling (above left) was sold off as** ***Olympic*** **was scrapped**

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Yo, ho, ho and a gallon of rum!

Known in infamy as "Black Tot Day," July 31, 1970 was a day of grieving that marked the Royal Navy's last daily rum ration after more than 200 years. If you still haven't got over that this could help drown your sorrows – but at a price. The unopened one-gallon stoneware flagon of 1970 RN-issue rum sold for £2,356, which equates to £467 for a standard 75cl bottle. Depending on your disposition, that's enough to drive you to drink – or from it. Merry Christmas to you all.

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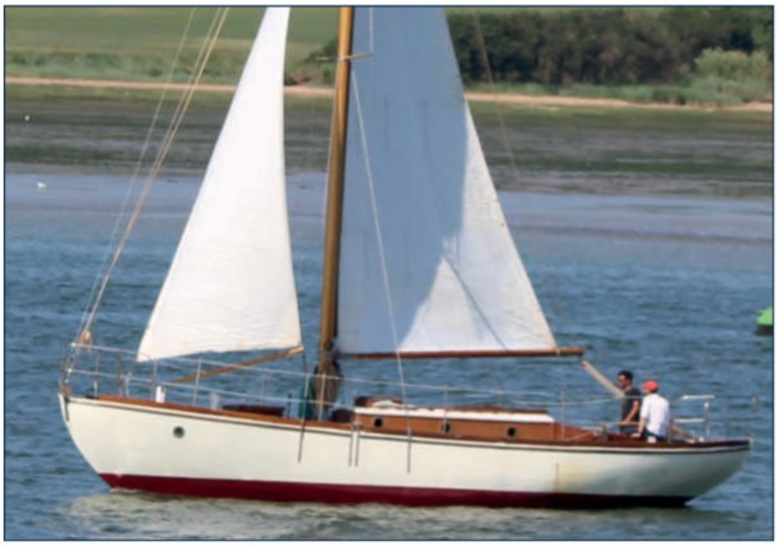
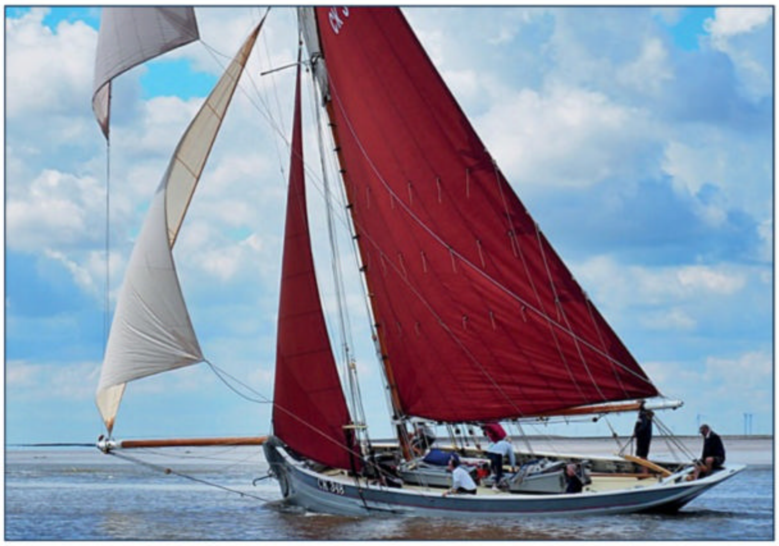


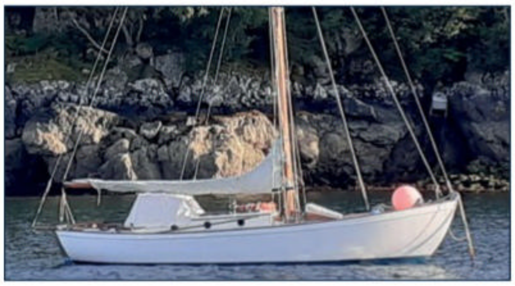
35’ Fred Shepherd designed *SELENA KING* built by Harry King for Arthur Ransome in 1938. Recently brought back to the UK after many years across the Atlantic for the completion of a major rebuild by the present owner. A historically significant yacht in fine condition. Extensive article featured in this magazine.

Suffolk £68,000



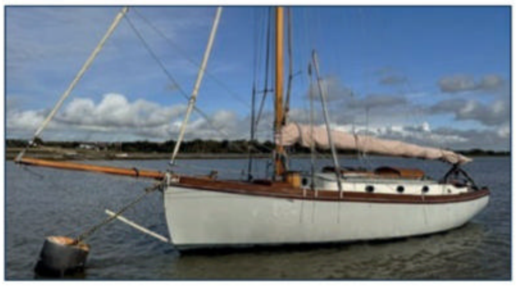
46’ Kidby Oyster Smack built in 1907. Complete rebuild finished in 2003. Major upgrades since with engine installation, new interior and all new racing rig. Fast and respected boat in the Smack fleet, very well maintained and cared for. 9 berths inc. 3 doubles. 2024 survey report. A turn key racing Smack at the front of the fleet.

Essex £98,000



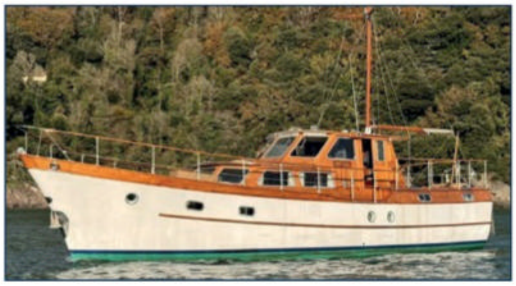
25’ Laurent Giles Vertue No.2, the second ever Vertue launched, built by Elkins in 1937. Pitch pine hull with bronze floors, lead keel and bronze keel bolts. These early Vertues are arguably prettier boats with a smaller coachroof, more pronounced sheer and less freeboard. The most iconic small cruising boat design of all time.

Scotland £14,500



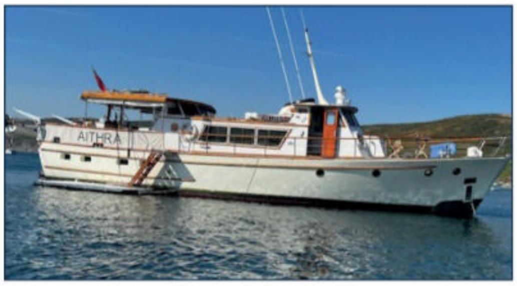
28’ Harry Feltham Gaff Cutter built in 1930. Major rebuild in 2000. Pitch pine on oak frames with new wrought iron keel bolts. 4 berths in cosy cabin. Professional shipwright owner for last 4 years. Attractive easily handled gaffer with furling headsails and self tailing winches presented in tidy condition.

Essex £20,000



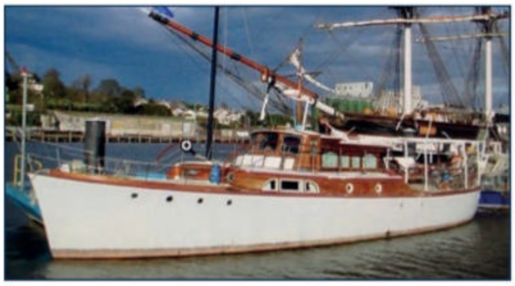
48’ Philip 50 Motor Yacht built by Philip & Son of Dartmouth in 1967. Well maintained yacht presented in very smart and ready to go condition. 7 berths in 3 sleeping cabins plus 2 heads compartments. Perkins 6354 diesels with huge capacity fuel tanks giving over 2000Nm range. A pedigree motor yacht of attractive size and volume.

Devon £159,000



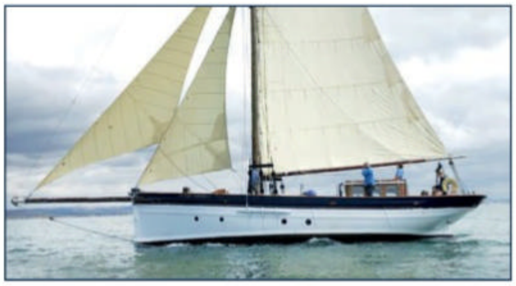
63’ Fleur De Lys Motor Yacht built by Dagless Ltd in 1967, one of the largest motor yachts they designed. Elegant and commanding yacht with forward wheelhouse and funnel. 162hp Volve Penta diesels give easy 8 knots cruising speed. 10 berths in 4 sleeping cabins. Covered aft deck area. Major recent refit work. 2021 survey report.

Devon £150,000



68’ Silvers Twin Screw Motor Yacht built in 1937. Being sold as an unfinished project with a lot of good quality structural refit work already carried out. Perkins M135 engines with very low hours. Largely empty interior with some original joinery. A very striking pedigree motor yacht with the potential to be a superb and rather special vessel.

Kent £65,000

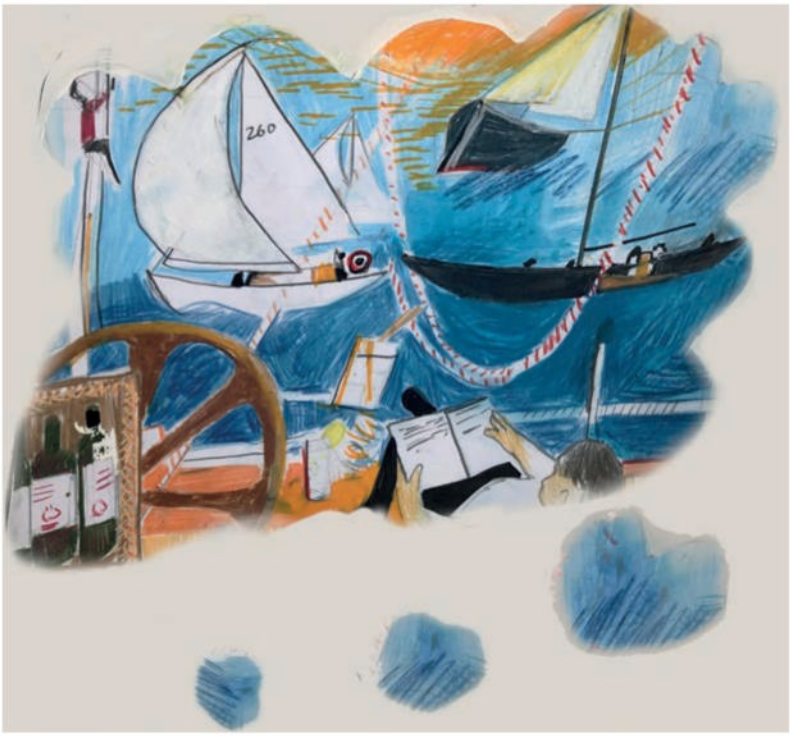


45’ Bristol Channel Pilot Cutter replica yacht launched in 2014. Design altered with extra freeboard to increase interior volume, and a doghouse which is a superb addition for cruising. Large interior with 10 berths in 4 cabins. Well proven yacht with several good cruising seasons under her belt and well maintained since launch.

Sussex £175,000

Another fascinating selection of traditional and classic yachts only from Wooden Ships. Call for true descriptions, genuine honest values and a service from people who know their boats.

Adrian Morgan



CHARLOTTE WATTERS

Meaningful boats

Making memories on the ocean waves

Of the boats I have sailed on over the years, some stand out. They include a multiple Bermuda race winner; a J-Class America's Cup challenger; the first yacht to have been sailed singlehanded non stop around the world and, of course, *Sally*, the boat I have owned for nigh on 30 years. Each hold memories, some just flashes from a day's sail, others encompassing many seasons. From a race aboard *Moonbeam*, it's asking the skipper of that mighty Fife, hissing rail down in the Kyles of Bute, why a fellow skipper of another big Fife was on the runner tail and being told that it was the most important position that day; fail to get the new one on, and you risk losing the mast.

The yawl *Finisterre* is better known in the States, where she is remembered for winning the Bermuda Race a record three times. Her owner, Carleton Mitchell, had her designed by S&S, her secret, as the current owner at Antigua Sailing Week told me, was the super heavy cast bronze keel matrix which housed her centreboard and spread mast loads, but which was not rated under the then CCA rule. I envied our Antiguan crewman effortless shinning up the weather side of the mast, harness-less and halyard-free, to retrieve some recalcitrant bit of string.

Most of those conjure up pleasant memories. Even the painful progress we made towards Madeira on an ex Whitbread maxi. I had a plane to catch, but plenty of time to explore the island, had it not been for whoever happened to be on the wheel, aside from the skipper and mate. In a series of wayward swoops, we wove towards our goal, in irons it seemed most of the time as I lay in my bunk cursing, until barely 12 hours remained before my plane left. Cutting my losses, I booked into the best hotel I could afford and invited the crew to share my enormous room for a few blissful hours of baths, showers, mini bar, room service and relaxation. I never saw Madeira.

"I sailed on the slowest Fastnet on record and during which I read three books"

Of the J-Class, it was the dozen bottles of Royal Yacht Squadron claret that arrived alongside *Endeavour*, delivered by club steward on club launch as we hove to off Cowes, with a company of Imperial Poona Yacht Club members aboard, all of whom insisted they pay for the consignment, as all – it appeared – were RYS members and equally well heeled. Elizabth Meyer, the yacht's saviour was aboard as may well have been Frank Murdoch, TOM Sopwith's right hand man, and designer of many of her innovative features in a yacht that so nearly won the cup in 1934 against a slower, but better sailed *Rainbow*.

He was certainly there at her launch from Huismans in Vollenhove, a yard that built *Flyer*, Connie van Rietschoten's 65ft (19.8m) 1977 Whitbread Race winner, on which I sailed on the slowest Fastnet on record and during which I read three books as we sun bathed our way down Channel to the lighthouse, and drifted slowly back to Plymouth where I caught a taxi home in time to win the last race of the Laser series, to the anguish of my chief rival who thought I was safely out of the way.

It is the boats that trigger the memories, which in turn bring back faces of ship mates. Peter Crowther (and small daughter) aboard *Galway Blazer* fighting to enter Dartmouth, the Swan 53 in Sardinia, with Ted Heath's skipper Owen Parker, and Billy, who we hoisted to *Flyer's* mast head by slipping a bowline round his sleeping feet. Where, like a hog tied bull, he roared down from a safe height, until he saw the funny side. Later that year I watched *Flyer* start the race off Portsmouth, and finish in a Force 10 a year later with a school friend aboard, with whom I had sailed the Atlantic soon after leaving university. I was set to be a teacher, which would have been a disaster, until Hugh turned up as I varnished my National 12 with news he was off to the Caribbean on a wooden sloop. I needed barely a second to join him. That we knew little about navigation didn't seem to bother us, until we both plotted Anxa in the middle of Cadiz, and realised we needed a pair of sights to achieve a fix. I cannot blame Mary Blewitt.

But I've run out of space for *Suhaili* and Sir Robin Knox-Johnston in the Solent, the Fife ketch *Kentra* with Eric Tabarly at the wheel at a tragic Nioulargue, and, always, there's *Sally*.

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RÜDIGER STIHL

The chainsaw saviour

Over the years, Rüdiger Stihl has owned many classis, some restored from wrecks, others built new to old designs. He is a lover of "lost causes" and his contribution to the classic boat renaissance is underrated

WORDS RON VALENT

Although he will be the last person to admit this, Rüdiger Stihl personifies the gentleman yachtsman. Soft spoken, modest, knowledgeable about many aspects of classic yachts both historically as well as technically, but above all, passionately and actively involved. Up to a short while ago he simultaneously owned no fewer than four classic yachts: a 75 m^2 Skerrycruiser, two 8-Metres and, together with his friend Jozef Martin, the 12-Metre *Anitra*. Two of these yachts are totally restored classics while two others were built new to original plans.

Rüdiger Stihl had the means to pursue his passion, but he could just as easily have chosen a large yacht with all the comfort and prestige involved. Instead, he sails in relatively small and, at times, uncomfortable classic yachts and actively participates in their sailing.

How long have you been sailing?

"I started when I was about 16. After my studies I returned to the family business in Waiblingen in 1978. I set up a legal department to fight against infringements on the intellectual rights of the products of our successful brand of forest and garden tools. I have been doing that ever since.

"My first boat was a 23ft (7m), polyester one but was very disappointing. Together with a friend I then bought a Lacustre. A fast and beautiful boat with an active class on the Swiss and German lakes. That is where I met Sepp Martin, the owner of the now famous Martin Werft in Radolfszell. He showed me an 8-Metre he had in his yard.

"My interest in this type grew and I came into contact with Walter Latsche, a Swiss man who lived in Cannes. He had an 8-Metre called *Ayana*, which I bought and shipped to Geneva to take part in the 8-Metre World Cup in 1998. I slowly had her improved back to regatta condition at Sepp Martin's yard. He is a perfectionist and gives a lot of attention to both beauty as well as historical correctness.

"I went to several regattas like the World Championship in La Trinité with *Ayana*. By this time... I think it was 2003... Sepp Martin had become a true friend and we talked about owning something bigger. We started looking around for a 12-M. In the United States we finally found one, designed by Starling Burgess and built by Abeking & Rasmussen.

"She was eventually completely rebuilt in Sepp's yard. Only the lead keel and some deck beams are original. But it was done piece by piece, so the boat was always there. With the interior, we decided to be faithful to the original Burgess design. *Anitra* has what I feel is the most beautiful interior of all the 12s in our fleet here. I am convinced that these classic yachts should not sacrifice things like that in the eternal quest for more speed. She was launched in 2008. On the very first sail I fell overboard. During a tack I didn't pay attention for a second and simply slipped off the deck. From that day on they gave me the nickname 'Bademeister' ie swimming instructor!

"Before *Anitra* I also acquired another 8-Metre. I felt the need to be more competitive, to be in the front of the fleet fighting for the prizes. In heavy weather *Ayana* was fast but she suffered in light to medium weather. I found an extremely fast boat called *Wyvern* and had her restored by Martin.

"After that she was unbeatable in light and medium weather, and we won the World Championship in Geneva in 2014. But at the World Cup in Hankø the waves can be quite steep and close together. *Wyvern* has a relatively wide bow section and she doesn't cut through the waves so well. I started thinking about another boat again, but this time a new one to old plans.

"In 2012 I commissioned the naval architect Juliane Hempel to go to Sweden and try and find a suitable design to build new. I felt that Gustav Estlander had designed the most beautiful and fastest ones. There is a Skerry Cruiser association in Sweden and they had a lot of information in their archives. Together with Juliane they looked at something like 24 designs and selected three 75 Square Metres by Estlander. They are narrow boats, so to be able to get a reasonable interior, they often had these horribly high cabin tops. We agreed on one with the most beautiful lines and the lowest coachroof. It was built between 2016 and 2017. It was a design from 1927 and we christened her *Gustaf*. She was of course built by Sepp Martin.

"In 2018 we took her to a regatta in Sweden and won against a fine fleet of similar boats. After this success we started thinking about a new 8-Metre as well. I had always admired Starling Burgess, based on my experiences with *Anitra* and *Wyvern* and of course his later success with the J-Class *Ranger*. I figured if I could find an 8-Metre that was 10 years younger than the ones from 1928, she should be quite fast.

"We eventually found one from 1937 for a yacht in aluminium that had never been built. The original plans were transformed into a 3D design by Juliane Hempel to be built in wood. She was finished rather quickly by Martin who achieved this by having two teams work on the boat at the same time. One on the hull and the other on the deck. When completed, the two sections were simply put together.

"In 2022 I took part in the 8-Metre Worlds on Lake Geneva and she turned out to be everything we hoped for. Besides having incredibly lovely lines she is also really fast and we became World Champion in the Sira Class."

What is your role on board your yachts? Are you the helmsman?

"Haha. No, I am an extremely important employee on the runners. I prefer to leave the responsibility of steering to someone more experienced in that area. Everybody on board is an amateur. I do not like the atmosphere on boats with professional crew. We are all friends and the whole idea is to have fun and enjoy the sailing together."

How do you feel about the way classic yachts are being optimised to be faster?

"Originally when these yachts were built, aesthetics and beautiful lines were all defining. The materials they had are what was used. One shouldn't stress these old boats now with modern materials just to go faster. These things have an enormous impact, not just on the speed but also on the stressing of the hulls."

What next? You have an 8 and a 12-Metre. Perhaps a new 10-Metre to fill the gap between the two?

"Haha. No, I am 81 years old and have come to the end of a long period of passion and time spent on new projects. Now I just want to enjoy sailing the boats I have. I sold *Wyvern,* and *Anitra* is for sale. I have given the Starling Burgess to my daughter as a wedding present so now I only have *Gustaf* and *Ayana*."

BACK TO

She was at Dunkirk in 1940 and she'll be returning in 2025. Right now, the Camper & Nicholson TSDY is celebrating the refit of a lifetime

WORDS STEFFAN MEYRIC HUGHES

Some said it couldn't be done. Rescuing 338,000 troops from Dunkirk and the clutches of the Nazis in 1940 using a motley flotilla of small pleasure vessels from English shores and rivers seemed too dinky and unconventional to some at the time. But the steel-hulled *Llanthony* played her part heroically alongside the 800 or more other 'little ships' at Operation Dynamo, today seen as an audacious, imaginative and (meteorologically) lucky answer to an impossible predicament. Eight decades later, when the small, upper Thames boatyard of Michael Dennett took on a complete restoration, some again said it couldn't be done. You can guess the outcome from the photos on these pages, but perhaps not the question: how would a yard like Dennetts take on a yacht… it's tempting to call *Llanthony* a ship… of a size that just getting her this far up the Thames would be a challenge; a yacht too big to be slipped ashore; a vessel that was going to have a 'superyacht' standard interior and systems, and one that needed to be done in about 18 months, afloat, with a staff of around 10 more accustomed to wooden hulls?

It wasn't due to my efforts. I've been volunteering at the yard occasionally over the last few months, but my work on

DUNKIRK

Llanthony was limited to peeling shrink-wrap plastic off fridges. I did witness much of the real work, which always seemed to hurtle on at breakneck pace in the absences between visits. The customary tea breaks carried on, always announced by young AJ's fractured bellow of "tea's up" at the appointed hour. Michael Dennett, 83, still turned up to work every day with his sandwiches and newspaper and sat on his usual chair. Conversation at lunch hour encompassed many things… flood 'liaison' officers (the Dennetts yard is prone to vulnerable to rain and river and flooded badly in January last year), 20mph zones, the difference between a cannon and a machinegun, the quality of microwave spag bol, and… occasionally… an enquiry into how stressed Steve Dennett the boss was as the impossible deadline loomed. The answer? Not as much as you or I would be. Dennetts was going to have a go at *Llanthony*, but in their own way, the way of a small, trad yard that's done countless restorations over 60 years.

THE DESIGN LEGACY

When *Llanthony* was built in 1934, the yard of Camper & Nicholsons (C&N) was riding a wave of popularity in the design and build of cruising motor yachts, sharing a global stage with GL Watson and Co in Scotland, then under the control of the designer James Rennie Barnett.

While Watson was building some of the greatest yachts of the inter-war age in grand, traditional style (a number of which have been rebuilt this century, including *Nahlin*, *Blue Bird* and *Lady Hertha*), C&N, then under the helm of Charles E Nicholson, had taken a different direction, with an emphasis on more comfortable, space-efficient interiors and modern external appearance.

According to William Collier, who undertook the design work for the recent restoration of the 165ft (50.3m) Camper & Nicholson motor yacht *Malahne* (1937), it was a trend that began with the firm's introduction of diesel engines on large motor yachts, starting with the aptly-named 148ft (45m)

Pioneer (1914) for Paris Singer, one of the many sewing machine heirs who took up yachting.

In the post-World War One climate, when budget issues were more important to would-be yacht owners, the reduction in overall size for the same or better accommodation, thanks to the elimination of boiler rooms, made motor yachts very appealing. Following this, the firm introduced designs with better layouts, with built-up topsides that allowed for full-beam accommodation on the main deck, and fashionable profiles. This gave the firm the impetus to dominate motor yacht design in the late 1930s, as exemplified by the recently-restored *Malahne*.

At 78ft in length, *Llanthony* was not an unusual yacht when she was launched from the C&N yard in 1934, but, says William, "she benefited from years of design development that gave her a sweet profile and good accommodation."

Today she's a rare example of a size that we might now think of as bridging the gap between yacht and superyacht; she's not quite either, but she's pure Camper & Nicholson in her appearance.

SEX, SCANDAL AND RUMOURS

Llathony was built, in 1934, for Lionel Beaumont-Thomas, a Welsh businessman, politician and army officer who named his new boat after his home town in southern Wales, although *Llanthony* initially spent some years on the London river while her owner served as an MP in the Commons. Her next owner was William Astor, or William Waldorf II, 3rd Viscount Astor, to accord him the full splendour of his name, then resident at Hever Castle. He was rumoured to have played cupid to the romance between Lady Simpson and King Edward VIII aboard *Llanthony*. After the war, the boat was embroiled in the Profumo scandal of 1963, when the MP John Profumo would secretly meet model and 'showgirl' Chsitine Keeler arboard her, but between these two famously unwholesome interludes, there was the heroism of Dunkirk.

Above: Llanthony in 1950

Below: Lying on a Thames river bank before the big restoration

PHOTO: RANSOME LITERARY ESTATE, WITH PERMISSION

HEROISM AT DUNKIRK

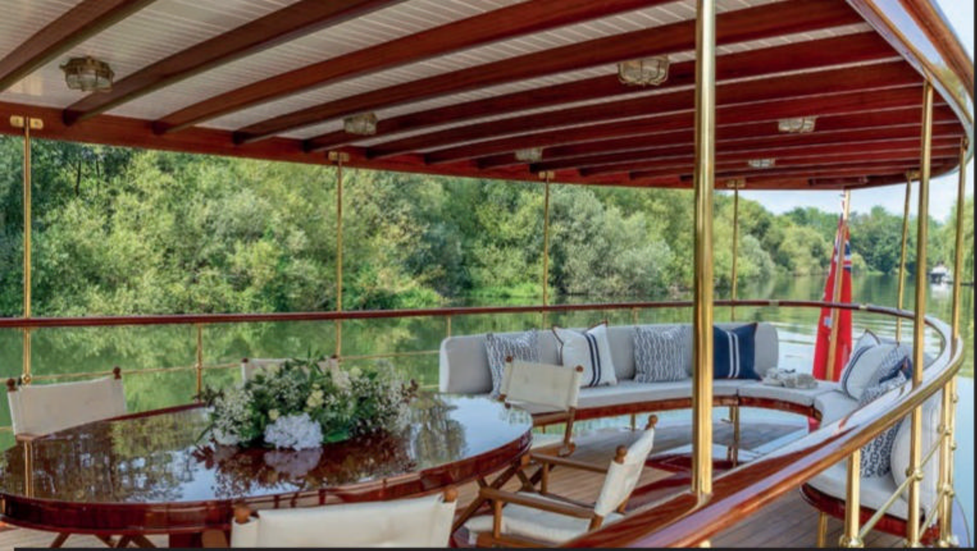
Sub Lieutenant Rober W Timbrell of the Canadian Royal Navy, stationed in Portsmouth, was just 20 when he was summoned in May 1940 to take *Llanthony* to Ramsgate in Kent. The yacht was hopelessly under quipped and armed only by the 1914 Colt 45 on Timbrell's belt. His crew was made up of six compatriot lumberjacks from Newfoundland and two civilian diesel engineers from London Transport. At Ramsgate, *Llanthony* was fuelled and equipped and ordered to sail for Dunkirk to anchor off the beach and embark as many troops as they could using the two tenders in davits. After two successful trips, taking around 120 men at a time, *Llanthony* was bombed on her third or fourth trip.

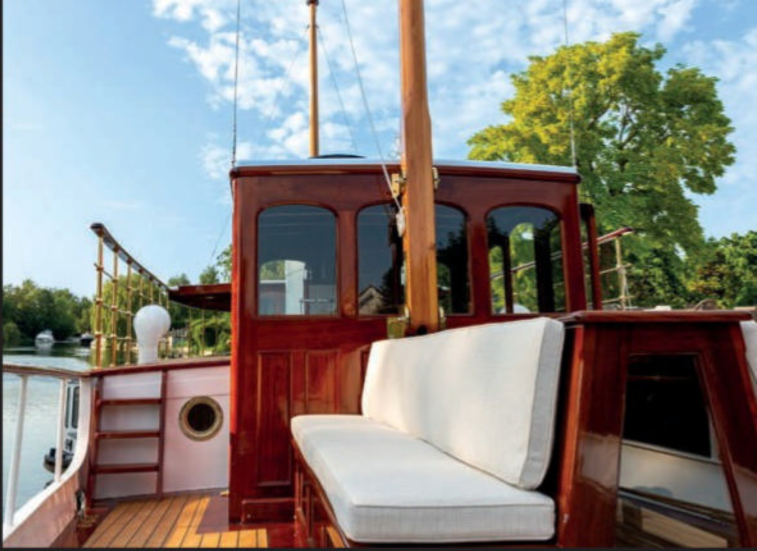
Forty years later, Admiral Timbrell, as he had then become, told his story to the Canadian Broadcasating Service. "We were hit on the fo'c's'le. I lost about five of the crew and both my anchors snapped. The fuel tanks were forward of the engine room and the fuel pipes were severed so that both engines died. We drifted up on the beach. It all happened so quickly. While I was high and dry, I hard the English voice of a sergeant marching some troops down, calling out the order to halt. He turned out to be from a Guards regiment. I asked him to get a Bren-gun carrier and drive it out as far as he could in the water until the engine stopped so that I could use it to anchor by. This is what he did, and my two civilian diesel engineers repaired the fuel pipe, got the capstan going and winched us off. They put a plate over my bombed fo'c's'le and we sailed back to England."

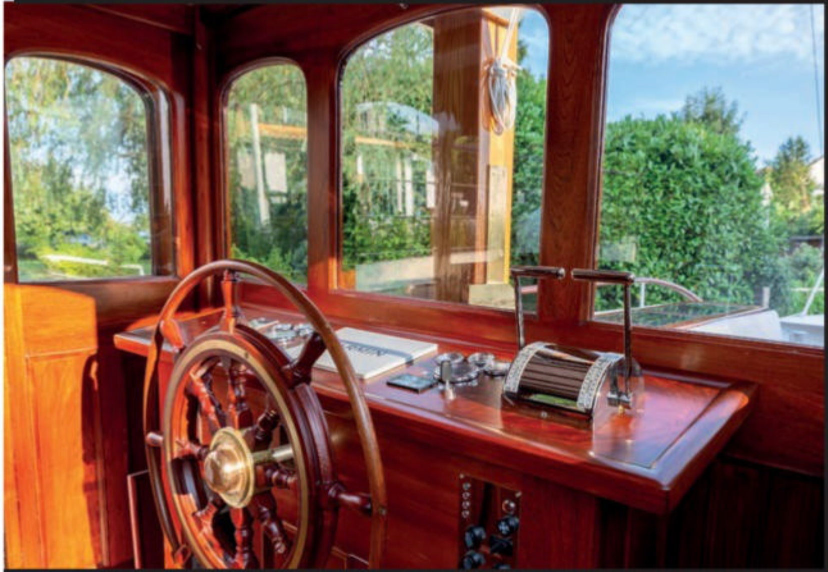
After that, Timbrell and *Llanthony* made more trips, this time with a convoy of four Scottish trawlers, one of which was lost to a mine with all hands. Another occasion saw an engagement between *Llanthony* and a German E Boat, which *Llanthony* was able to hold off thanks to its new armament of Bren guns and anti-tank weapons.

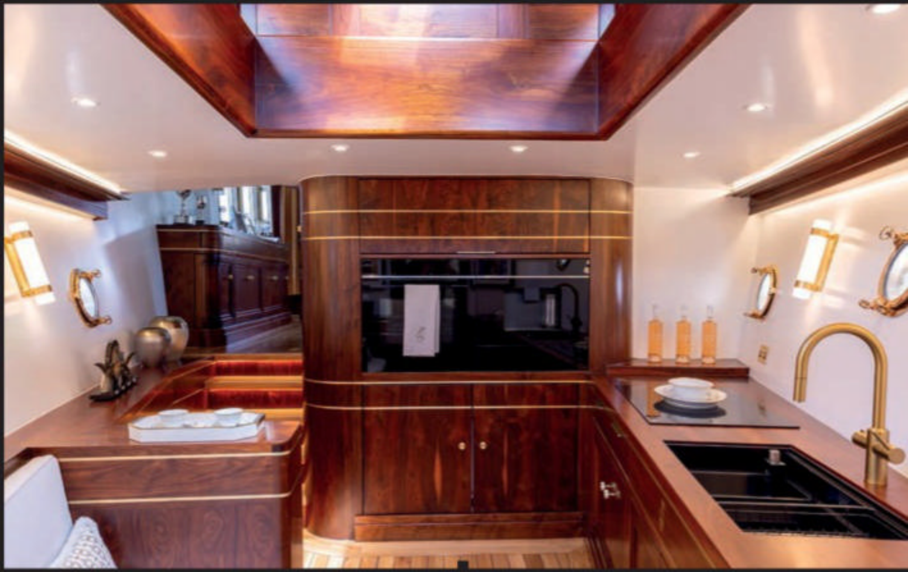
"While we were on the beach, a soldier ran towards us on a zig-zag course which miraculously avoided all the German shells," said Timbrell. "This was not good fieldwork, but due to a whole day spent in a French pub. He was drunker than anyone I had ever seen, and brought us a 'ticket' back to England – a case of brandy – then fell asleep in the wheelhouse for the return voyage."

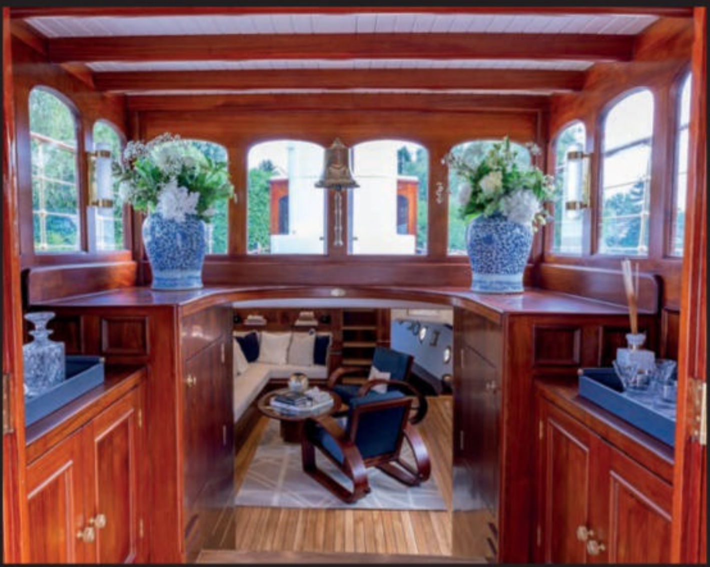
Llanthony rescued 280 soldiers from Dunkirk, and Lt Timbrell was awarded the Navy's Distinguished Service Cross. A Guards sergeant who helped on the beach after *Llanthony* was bombed, received the Distinguished Service Medal.



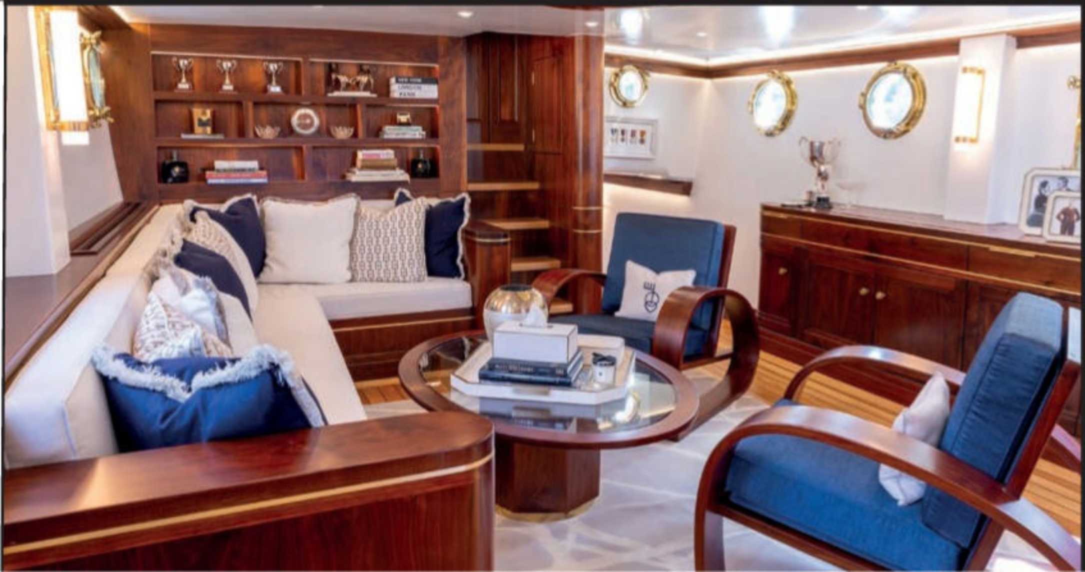








ANTHONY
PRIORY
CELLAR BAR
LLANTHONY



Clockwise from top left: The aft deck, with its hard canopy and custom seating, designed and built in house; The clerestory light structure on the foredeck now doubles as a seating area; Minimalist galley with plenty of brass and dark wood – even the drawer bottoms and sides are in 1in-thick walnut; Forward 'day' head – note *Llanthony* poster – part of the service!; Saloon with more Dennetts-designed and built furniture; Looking forward from wheelhouse to saloon; Owner's cabin detail; A commanding helm station

Above: Medals of valour from *Llanthony*'s history including the DSC (far left), DSM and Dunkirk Medal (far right)

PEACE

After the war, Astor sold the yacht to Baron Kroniker, Belgian military attaché during the war. A later owner, Ray Paton, owned *Llanthony* – then known as *Golden Era* – from 1985 to 1993, when she chartered in Greek and Turkish waters. He recalls that it was Kroniker who had work carried out to *Llanthony*'s bow profile, replacing the near-plumb original seen in old photos, and which was destroyed by the bomb at Dunkirk and hastily patched up, with a subtly concave clipper shape, although it is difficult to assess the extent of this change without access to the original plans which, as with so many C&N yachts, are missing. Skipper Luke Tickner of Perth, Australia, has a recollection that she was used as accommodation during oil exploration off northern Africa, and later running refugees from Lebanon to Cyprus, although the details of these escapades remain buried under the silt of time for now. By 1995, she was lying in Rhodes Harbour in a dilapidated state and rescued by a new owner who had the yacht renovated, including a rebuild of the Daimler Benz engines that Kroniker had installed to replace her original Gleniffers. She returned to British waters in 2000 to attend the five-yearly Dunkirk Return, and again in 2005. By 2019, however, she was abandoned and moored to the river bank near Henley, where she caught the eye of a local man...

A NEW ERA

The current owner, American born and living in Henley, was sent by his wife some years ago to on a mission to find a boat so they could enjoy the river and attend the annual Henley Traditional Boat Festival. He duly returned with a varnished wooden slipper launch, a classic choice for this sort of thing on the upper Thames and just what any responsible broker would have advised. It was from the wheel of this launch in 2017 that he spotted *Llanthony* by the river bank in, by then, quite a state of dereliction, and for sale: not, on the surface of it, a sensible choice. Of course, he bought her.

Heather Dennett was the first person appointed to the project, as interior designer, and in 2019, *Llanthony* went to Gillingham in Kent to have about a third of her steel plating above the waterline replaced. The project was soon stalled by the covid outbreak but on 22 March 2022, she arrived at Dennetts as an empty steel hull void of superstructure or interior, with a makeshift steering position on her mid deck. During the delivery trip, it became clear that her two Caterpillar engines would need replacing, along with all internal systems.

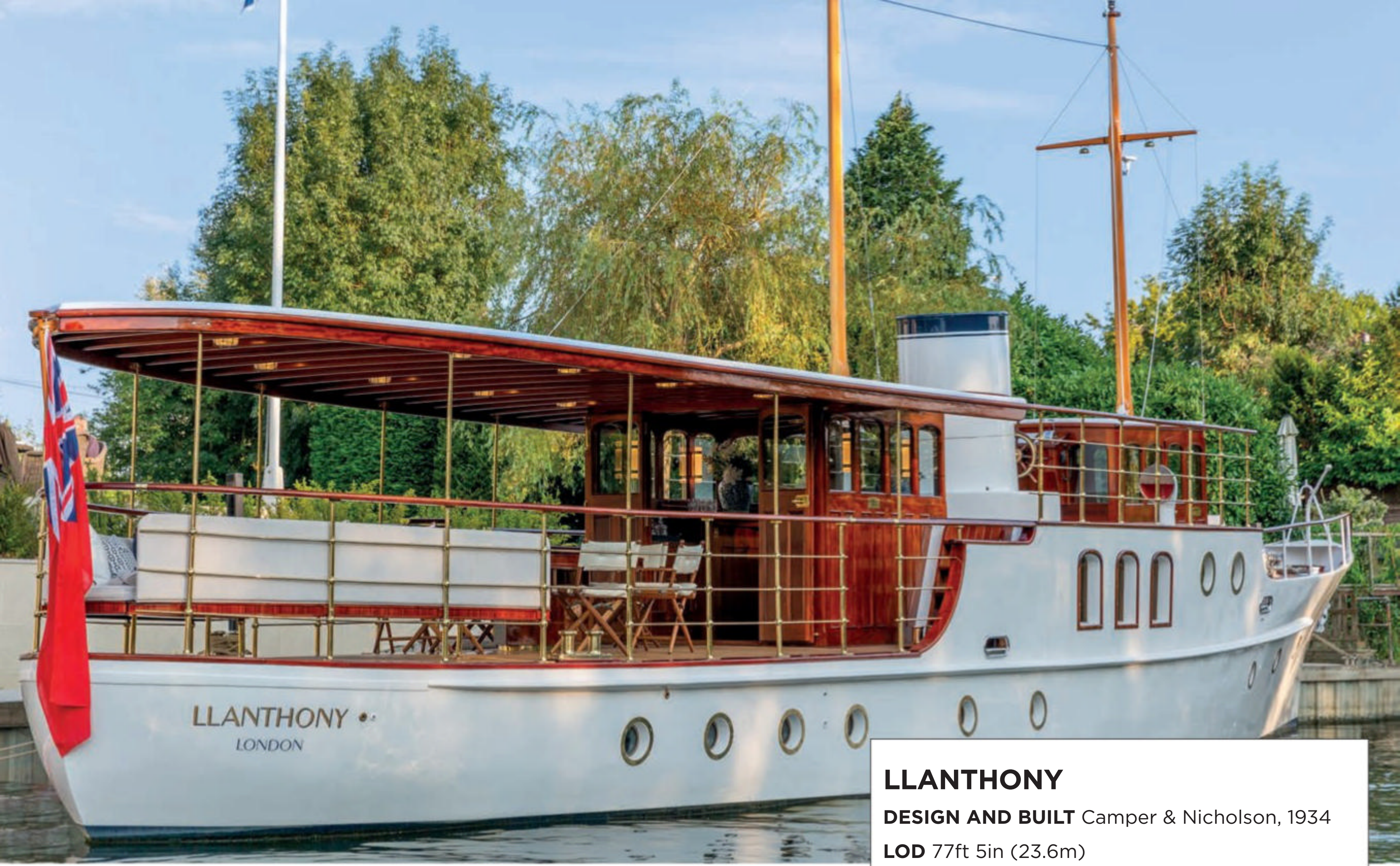
"As with many of these old ships after multiple owners and lives, they can lose their original identity with cabin extensions and alterations," says Heather Dennett. "The main goal of her exterior renovations was to regain her original beautiful lines and replace her iconic Camper and Nicholson superstructure."

That structure is clearly visible today, with the classic Nicholson motoryacht trademarks of the raised topside amidships and the nearly 'three-box' silhouette, so modern in its day and now so evocative of the inter-war years. Her wheelhouse and cuddy were newly built in 2in-thick teak details as original, down to the beadings and radius of her portholes.

Inside saw an even bigger transformation: Heather makes no secret that there is nothing original about the interior, believing firmly that it's only by keeping old yachts like this relevant to modern expectations that they can be kept alive. The interior is now laid out for the owner, wife and daughter, with two good-sized en-suite cabins in the aft section, a large saloon immediately forward of the wheelhouse, then forward of that, a full-featured galley with a day head in the forepeak. The timber palette inside is English oak and American black walnut; the former giveing a neutral counterpoint to the dark, rich walnut. It's a choice that can create dark interiors but it works well on *Llanthony*, which is blessed with plenty of light: the funnel is a lightwell, the galley has a gullwing skylight above and there are plenty of portholes, now once again uniform after Steve Dennett sent an original to a metalworker in Indonesia to have the rest replicated. Before that, the boat was a hotchpotch of different portholes, portlights and deadlights. A point of interest is the brass inlaid strip that runs throughout the interior at about hip height, a nod to the sinuous line that once again defines her outside.

The idea of finishing *Llanthony* in time for the Henley Trad in July 2024 seemed impossible. At one point, three generations of Dennetts were working on the boat at once (grandad Michael, 83, dad Steve and Steve's son Elliott, aged 11) then one day, she cast off and made a quick trip up and down the river to test the engines. After that, she wowed the crowds at Henley and won many awards, including the one for best restoration. Now a new future awaits: the Dunkirk Return in May this year, then cruising in the Med. For now, she's just wintering quietly afloat at the end of the Dennetts Thames-side back garden, a few hundred yards from where she was reborn.

Below: The awards won by *Llanthony* at the 2024 Thames Trad. The big cup is the Fred and Sheila Bourne Trophy for the 'best boat in show'


LLANTHONY
LONDON

LLANTHONY

DESIGN AND BUILT Camper & Nicholson, 1934

LOD 77ft 5in (23.6m)

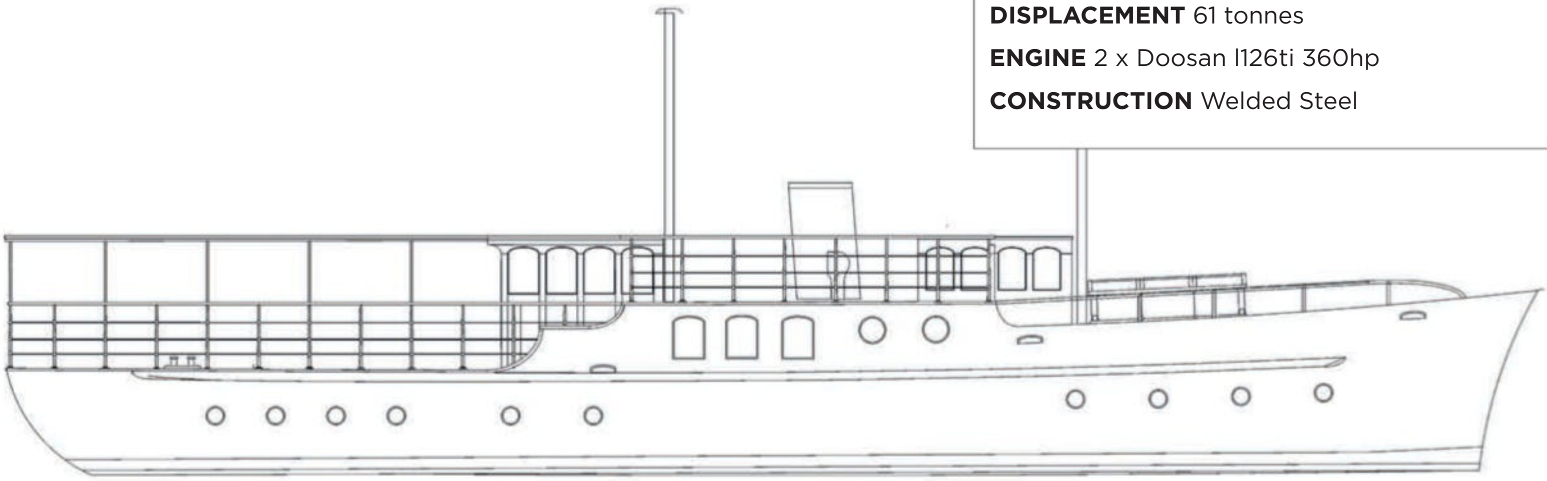
BEAM 14ft 6in (4.4m)

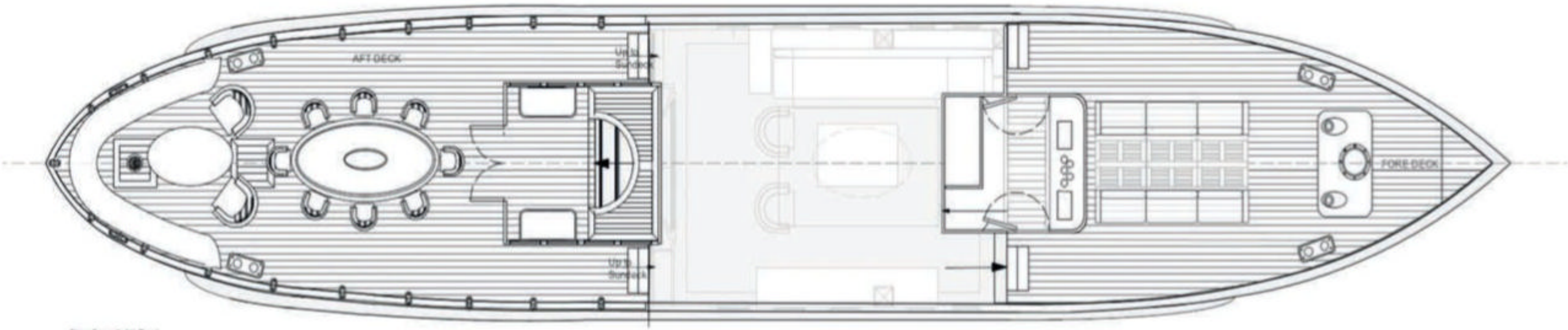
DRAFT 5ft 5in (1.7m)

DISPLACEMENT 61 tonnes

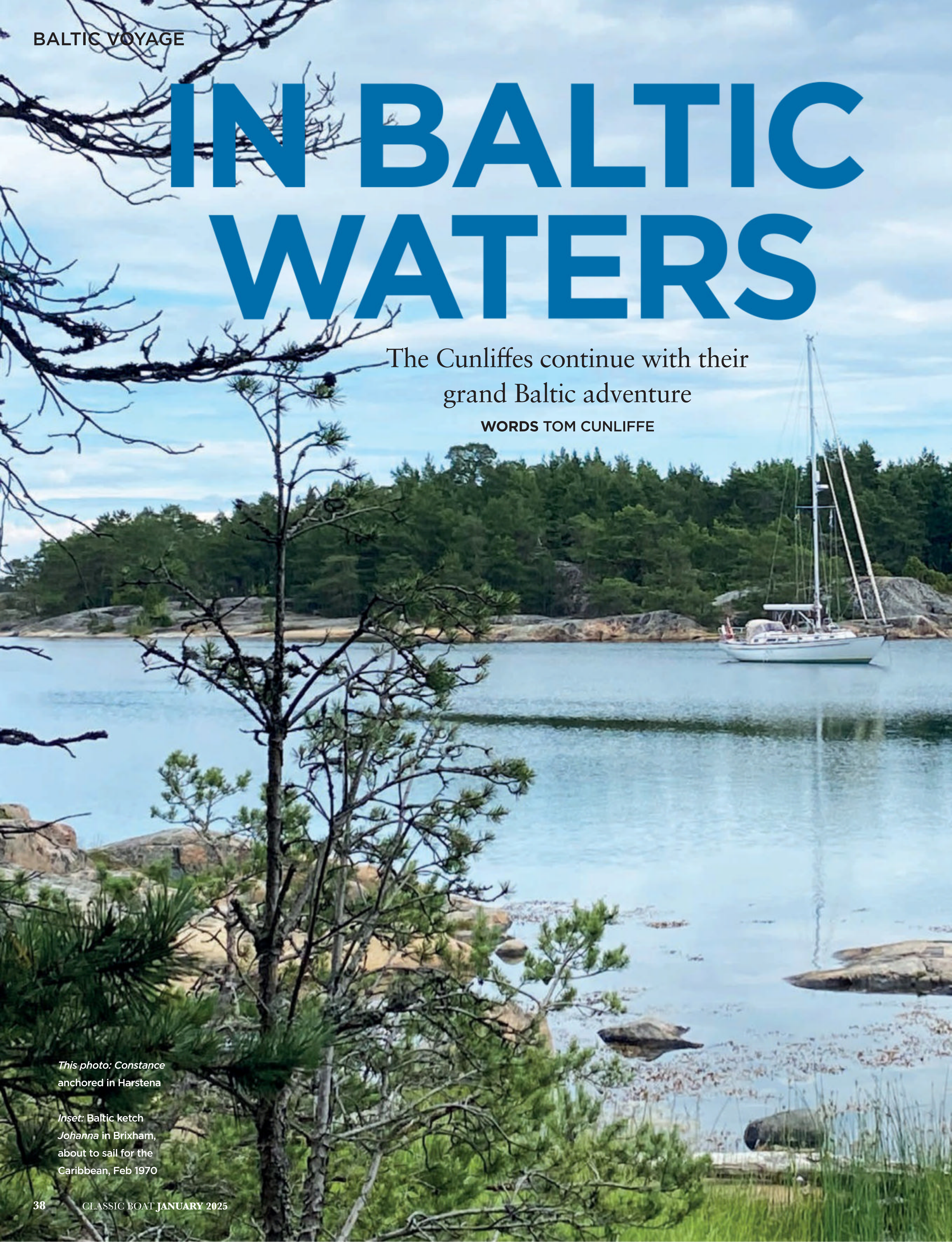
ENGINE 2 x Doosan l126ti 360hp

CONSTRUCTION Welded Steel




AFT DECK
Up to Sundeck
Up to Sundeck
FORE DECK

Plan Fore & Aft Deck



IN BALTIC WATERS

The Cunliffes continue with their grand Baltic adventure

WORDS TOM CUNLIFFE

This photo: Constance anchored in Harstena

Inset: Baltic ketch *Johanna* in Brixham, about to sail for the Caribbean, Feb 1970

I started this summer's Baltic Sea cruise with what was intended as a trip down Memory Lane. My boat *Constance*, an American Mason 44, lives in a heated shed on an island near the bottom end of Jutland and after the usual scrape round the local hardware stores to get her going after the winter we headed straight out for Fåborg on the bigger land mass of Fyn. The reason for the visit was to check out anything I could discover about *Johanne*, the 90-ton galeas-rigged trading ketch built in the town in 1929 in which I served 40 years later. I came close to losing my life aboard her, but I also met my lifelong shipmate, Roz. How *Johanne* and I fell in together is too convoluted a tale to tell here. Fresh from trading when I joined her, her history during my time was chequered, to put it politely, but she survived as many an old ship will, given a quarter of a chance. She ended up in the ownership of none other than Edward Allcard and his indomitable wife Clare, with whom she made some memorable voyages and had one or two more narrow squeaks from Davey Jones' Locker. Shortly before his death at the grand age of 102, Allcard arranged for the ship to become a symbol of the Catalan City of Badalona, just 'down the hill' as it were from his home in Andorra. She sails there to this day, in far better shape than she was when my shipmates and I pumped her out into the Atlantic.

Approaching Fåborg I'd been expecting a day in a museum poring through ancient photographs and papers, but that's not what happened. Five miles out the horizon was spiked with masts and sails all heading our way. These were not today's typical array of code zeros, asymmetric spinnakers and simple three-cornered mainsails. Far away to the eastward the square canvas of a topsail schooner strained to the afternoon breeze. Abeam and coming up fast was a barquentine, correct to the last buntline with every stitch set. No labour-saving roller headsails on her. A mile out from the harbour entrance, she finally began shortening sail as the fore royal clewed up and the outer jib came rattling in at the run with a couple of lively lads on the fo'c's'le head tailing onto the downhaul.

Streaming through the islands to the south ran a group of ketch-rigged galeases like the ship of my dreaming time; tarred hulls, perfect sheerlines, strongly rigged bowsprits over curved stems and, beneath their trademark stern davits, horizontally planked oval transoms. In they came, the mighty queens of the fleet surrounded by smaller working craft I could not place, but all manned by lusty crews of every age and sex, pulling together for the sheer joy of being part of such a fleet under sail in the waters where they were born.

The schooner skipper was almost into the wall before he clewed up his topsails and rounded up. The fore-and-aft canvas clattered down, and the semi-diesel engine started with a momentary wheeze, then a steady 'tonk-tonk-tonk' and a smoke ring from the chimney. The barquentine hove-to a cable to seaward to bare her spars before motoring quietly in with the others.

Last in was *Constance*. Way back we'd have held our heads high in such company with our 1911 Bristol Channel pilot cutter or our 1903 original Colin Archer but even now, as yachts go, ours isn't half bad. Her designer Al Mason did his time with John Alden, then worked with Philip Rhodes and Olin Stephens before going it alone. Perhaps that's enough said?

That evening we walked the docks. I honestly don't think you'd see the like today anywhere on Planet Earth. Tall Ships' gatherings are a noble sight, of course, and some of the vessels are impressive, but there's something earthy and totally genuine about the Danish working fleet. The heady smell from the marline seizings and the wooden hulls hovers over all so that a passer-by breathes in the ancient essence of man and the sea. Standing beneath the towering spars and hearing the crews yarning as the evening deepened brought our youth tumbling back. We felt the breeze of adventure once again as we wandered slowly back to *Constance* for a glass of old Barbados rum before turning in for the sweetest of dreams.

The Baltic is full of surprises and only days later we found ourselves in the middle of a very different fleet. This time it was yachts. We were sailing in to anchor at Dyvig on the island of Als when we became aware of three Folkboats hacking along with us into the rising breeze, pointing up well with their sails set to perfection. I love a proper clinker-built Folkboat. Anything that looks that good just has to be a joy to sail and these three were revelling in the flat water as they dipped their lee rails and flew up the bay, obviously on a mission of some sort.

At the head of the inlet stands a fancy hotel with a marina attached to it. Marinas hold no special attraction for us and we had decided to anchor in peace half a mile away. As the view came into focus, however, it became clear what the Folkboats were up to, so we pressed on for a closer look. Rafted up on the outside berths were two long, low yachts with towering spars. Boats without number were stacked up on the inside. Many were 'metre boats' from the 1906 rule and the pair of 'skyscrapers' were beautifully turned-out '12s'. Inside the marina, jammed in fender-to-fender, was an exhibition of traditional race boats that was worth sailing a long way to see.

Home-grown 'Skerry Cruisers' were in good supply, and it would be a mistake to take the name literally. These are serious performance machines of all sizes, often with elongated hulls, impossibly short rigs and low freeboard, built 100 years ago to compete in the 'no-wave' environment of the archipelagoes. Although originating in Sweden, these 'square-metre' classes were enthusiastically adopted by Germany after World War I and most of the yachts in Dyvig that day were flying German colours. We had stumbled on a major regatta and I was grateful that Al Mason had given *Constance* a set of lines that didn't disgrace her in such elevated company. Although her hull is of the plastic persuasion that suits us at this stage of our lives, she has more than her share of teak trim, and Roz maintains the varnish as finely as she did when we ran yachts for others. In the end, all boats are the sum of a 101 details. Our aluminium spars are painted white and I keep my boom stowed at that gentle rake that compliments the sheer and lifts the eye. We were interlopers, but the atmosphere here was a sea of conviviality and the boys and girls seemed to appreciate our red duster. The Folkboat guys setting up their cockpit tents gave us a warm-hearted wave, and a gent wearing a blazer on the counter of a spectacular 'Seefahrtkreuzer' raised his glass of Schnapps as we tiptoed by. His bright mahogany hull seemed to blaze in the setting sun.

Finally, we wriggled past two long, lean motor yachts out into open water and motored off to our anchorage to digest what we had just witnessed.

It's 500 miles from Dyvig to the start of the Stockholm Archipelago. Much of this is open water and the Baltic specialises in a spiteful little chop all of its own. If you are served up the sort of weather we had this year, the first 350nm are therefore to be endured rather than enjoyed, although the fresh water you are sailing in helps ease the pain. When we finally eased sheets between the rocks at the ancient pilot station of Kråkelund, we breathed a deep sigh as *Constance* surged away into calm water among the islands, rocks and skerries that run all the way from here past Stockholm and on via the Åland Islands to

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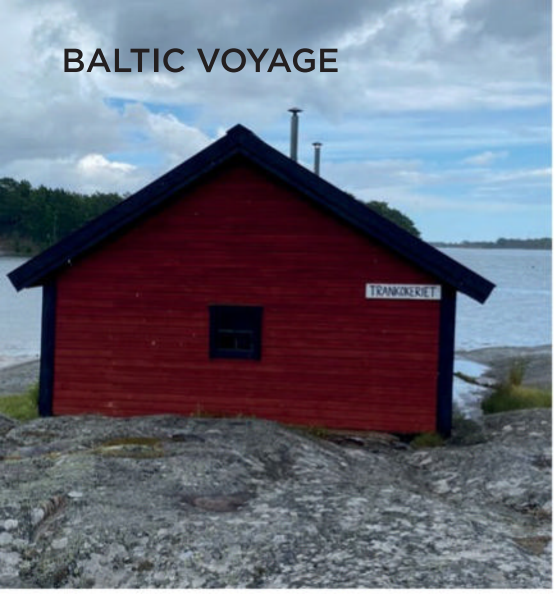
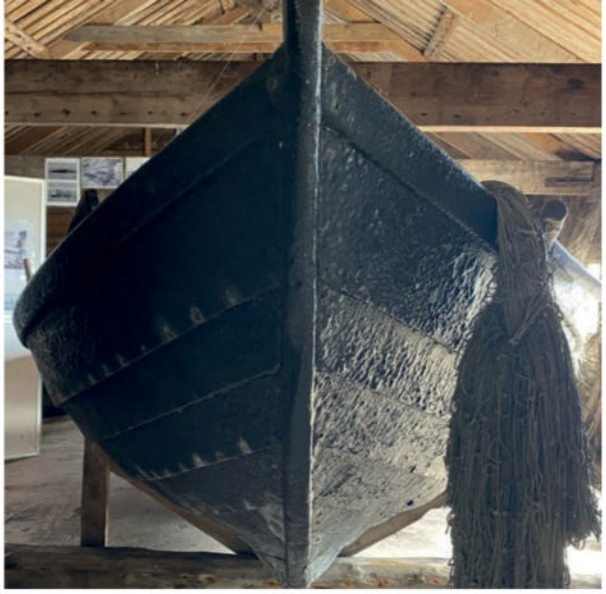
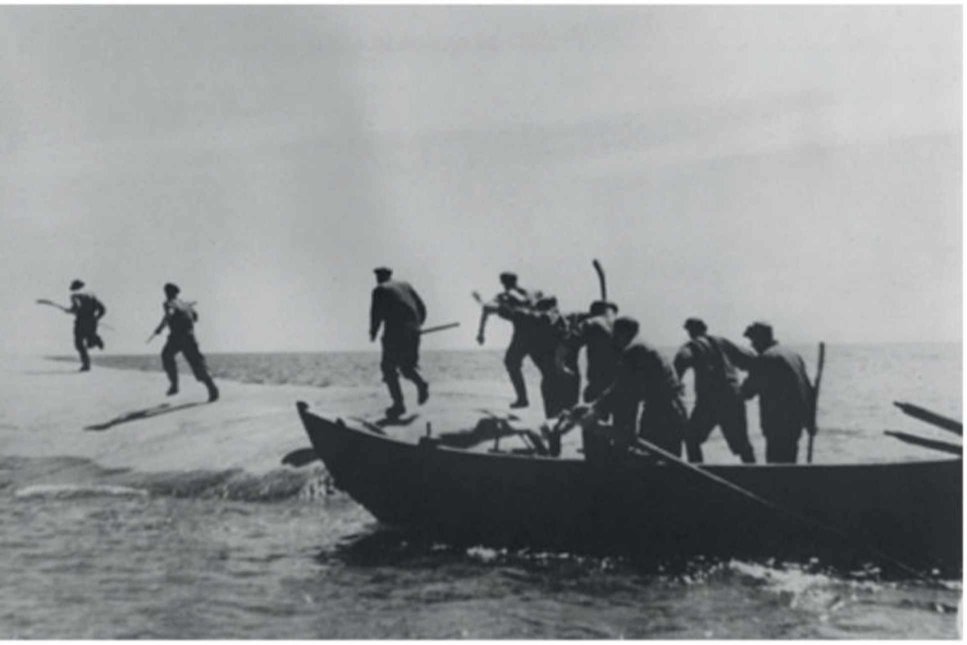
Facing page top: A galeas-rigged Baltic trader arrives at Faaborg
Facing page middle: A perfectly rigged folkboat sails up to Dyvig in flat water
Facing page bottom: A schooner clews up her tops'ls just in time to enter harbour
This page top: End of a day's racing at Dyvig
This page middle: Faaborg harbour
This page bottom: Yet another class act drying out her kit in Dyvig





Finland and Russia. They form an endless cruising paradise that one could sail for a hundred years and still discover new wonders.

Well north in the outer skerries lies the medium-sized island of Harstena. Rowing ashore in the sheltered anchorage, the best landing is on a shelf among the rocks that are a Swedish speciality. The islands are mainly composed of enormous granite slabs that time has clothed with a thin topsoil so that the larger ones are crowned with trees, both coniferous and deciduous. The rocks themselves have been smoothed by millennia of ice, which means that if you are unfortunate enough to encounter one of the thousands that lie just below the surface, a long-keeled vessel will ride gracefully up and come gently to a halt. Don't get me wrong, this is not a pleasant experience and those unfortunates with bolt-on keels still have to haul out to make sure all is well, but it's a whole lot preferable to piling up on a jagged pile of bricks in North Brittany. The rocks above the surface and along the shorelines soak up the sun of the endless summer days. The heat radiates into the water which regularly gets up to well over 20°C. This is attractive for swimmers and, historically, also for the seals of Harstena.



Above left: The ancient boathouse growing out of the rock itself

Above centre: The 140-year-old seal-hunting boat on the island of Harstena

Top right: In the old boathouse

After securing the dinghy we made off along a narrow pathway through the forest to the settlement on the other side of the car-free island. Standing alone at the extreme end of the village on its own rock by the water's edge, we found a red wooden boathouse literally growing out of the granite. Inside in the cool shade was a heavily constructed open boat of obvious antiquity, surrounded by nets hung to dry and barrels of what seemed to be fossilized fish. The boat was perhaps 23ft (7m) long with a healthy beam, built in the 1880s. A raking spoon bow conferred plenty of reserve buoyancy, as did the exaggerated flare of the topsides. Unusually for Scandinavia, the stern was a planked-up transom, but the hull was classic local construction, with broad clinker boards fastened with iron rivets. The sawn frames, I noted, were joggled into the lands of the planks with the same technique used for the cobles of northeast England. The ancient timber was tarred on the outside but clear inside and in remarkable condition. If you didn't examine her too closely, the boat looked as though she could be launched right there and then.

Her original job was to carry groups of men to the outer rocks where they hunted the seals that gathered in huge numbers. Faded photographs in the old school house, together with clubs and other artefacts, bore witness to the business. Grisly it may have been, but it gave a worthy living to this remote community.

A boat is always so much more than a painting or a photograph. To stand by this one in what could well have been its winter quarters was to connect directly with a people whose lives were utterly different from ours. With a hand on the gunwale, it wasn't hard to think about the men coming home over the rocks to their wives in the oil-lit cottages only a few generations ago, exhausted after a day of hunting and a hard row back against a rising westerly wind.

Years ago I met a Finnish girl who worked the inshore fishery from a remote island near the Russian border. Once, as she was casting off for a trip, I asked what she expected to catch. "Ah," she replied, "You never know what you'll find swimming in the sea."

She might have been talking about the boats in the Baltic.

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JANTHEA 1938, Dunkirk Little Ship.
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LADY ISABELLE 1930, Dunkirk Little Ship.
All Dunkirk Little Ships are unique with their link being their presence and participation in Operation Dynamo, none being quite so pretty as Lady Isabelle. Built in 1930 by Gibbs as a 30ft day launch, she is one of the smallest of the fleet but nonetheless a proud and bona fide member of the ADLS (Association of Dunkirk Little Ships).

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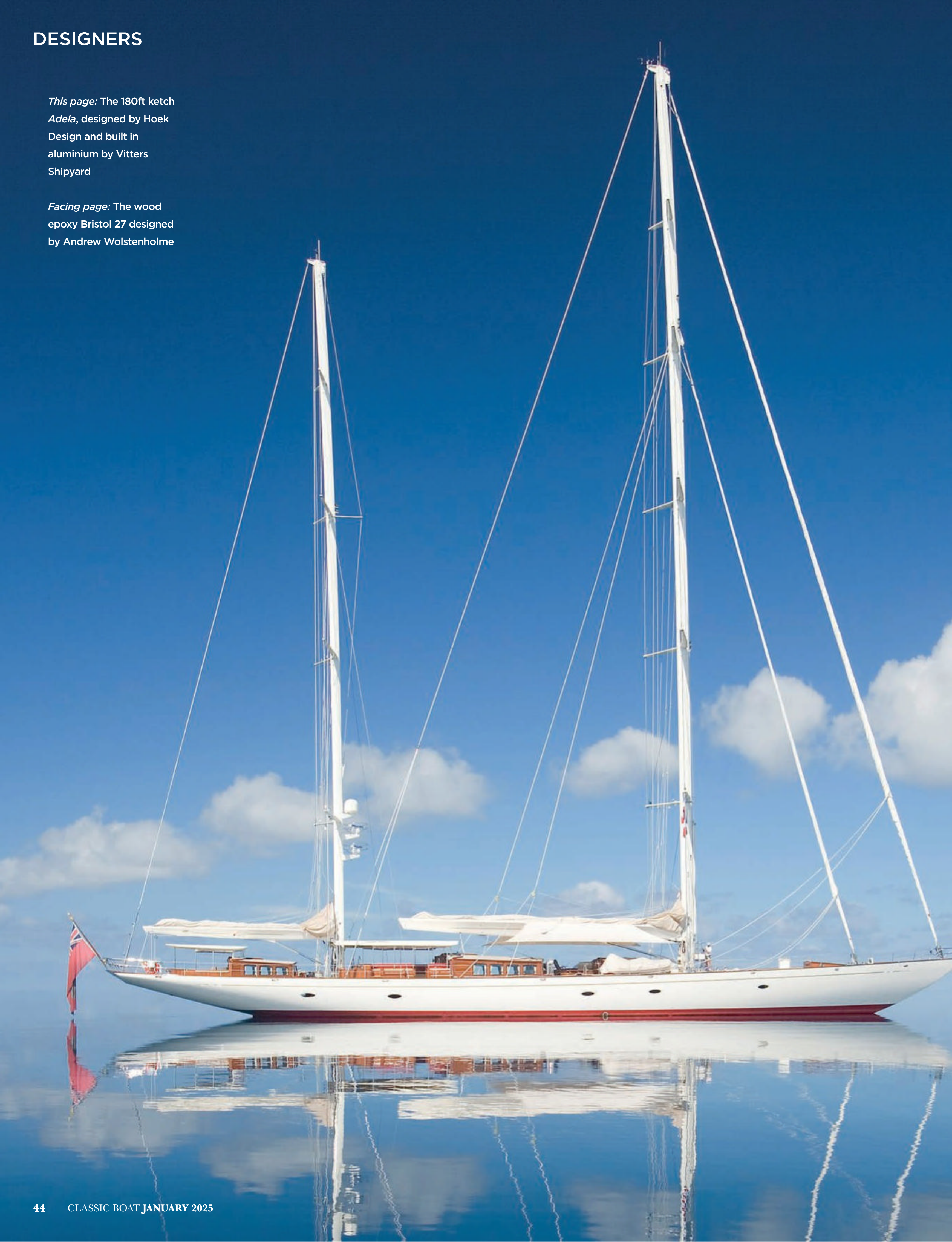
This page: The 180ft ketch *Adela*, designed by Hoek Design and built in aluminium by Vitters Shipyard

Facing page: The wood epoxy Bristol 27 designed by Andrew Wolstenholme



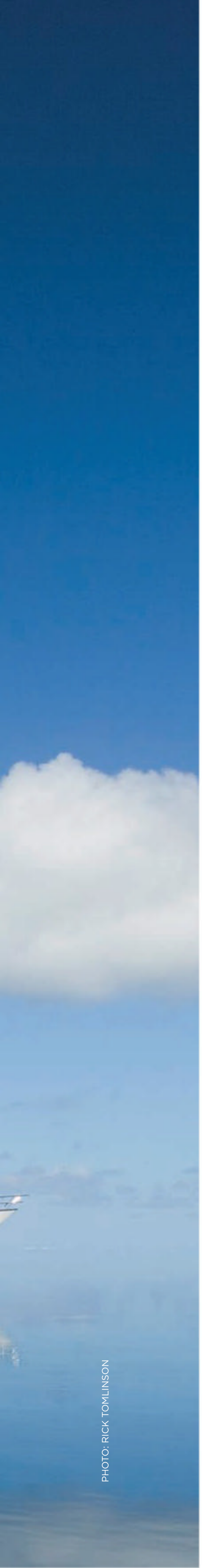


PHOTO: RICK TOMLINSON

SPIRITED AWAY

In the first of a two-part article, we look at the designers shaping the world of spirit-of-tradition yachts

WORDS NIGEL SHARP

It was about half a century ago that Spirit of Tradition boats began to appear, with the introduction of the original Cornish Crabber and the development of epoxy resins making significant contributions. Then, in the 1990s, the movement began to take root, and is now a very established and important part of the sailing and powerboat scene. While the normally-visible part of the hull and deck of a SoT boat retains the classic looks of a bygone era – typically with low freeboard, long overhangs, a graceful sheer and copious amounts of brightwork on deck – anything goes below the waterline and, for some, above the decks too; and a variety of materials – including wood epoxy, aluminium, steel, glassfibre and carbonfibre composite – lend themselves to hull and deck construction. Here we talk to some of the leading designers specialising in SoT boats to get their views on various aspects of this relatively new movement.

HULL AND DECK MATERIALS

So what are the preferred materials for building the hull and deck of a Spirit of Tradition boat? "Ask five people and you get five different opinions," said Andre Hoek. There will, of course, be a number of factors at play here. Client preference will be at the forefront of considerations, as will the size of the boat, relative costs, the number of boats to a particular design that might be produced, how and where the boat will be used and, if the builder has already been selected before the boat is designed, that builder's preference.

In many cases the designer's client will be a boatbuilding company rather than an individual, and that company may hope to sell several boats to the same design. In these cases the company will probably consider it worthwhile to invest in building plugs and female moulds for the hull and deck (and normally for many other components) to allow series production in glassfibre, normally using unsophisticated glass such as chopped strand mat and woven rovings with polyester resin. Andrew Wolstenholme has produced designs for several such companies including Cockwells (Hardy and Duchy motor launches), Cornish Crabbers (the Crabber 24) and Neil Thomson Boats (the Norfolk Gypsy and other small sailing boats). Similarly, Stephen Jones designed all but one of Rustler Yachts' current range of glassfibre sailing boats, including the Rustler 33 'weekender'.

But for the majority of one-off or limited-production SoT boats, wood epoxy is the preferred choice, not least because it tends to be cheaper than the alternatives (although it is always worth remembering that the cost of a hull is unlikely to be much more than 20 per cent of a boat's total cost) and also because it is generally considered to have many advantages and few disadvantages compared to traditional wood construction. But the term 'wood epoxy' can be used to describe a number of differing construction methods: cold moulding, with several layers of relatively thin and relatively wide veneers laid on top of each other in various orientations; strip planking, with relatively thick and relatively narrow strips of timber edge-glued to each other and laid longitudinally; and a combination of those two. Whichever of those is chosen, the outside of the hull will generally be sheathed with epoxy glass, in some cases several layers to provide additional structure, at other times just a single layer for impact resistance and to give a stable surface on which to apply a long-lasting paint system; and sometimes the inside is also sheathed with epoxy glass.

Above left: Spirit 72DH

Above right: Rustler 57

Far right: The unfinished wood epoxy *Dream Symphony* by Dykstra Naval Architects. At 463ft (141m) in length, she will be the largest wooden yacht ever built when she is launched

Pure cold moulding is rare these days as it is more labour intensive. This is basically because it is first necessary to build a male mould with relatively closely spaced temporary frames and longitudinal ribbands over which the first layer of veneer can be laid fairly; and all of the internal structural components (typically the laminated frames, floors, bulkheads, beamshelf etc) have to be fitted after the hull shell has been built, a difficult and time-consuming process with all the curves and bevels involved. By contrast, with longitudinal strip-planking (whether it is just the first or the only timber layer) the internal structural components can be relatively easily constructed and set up in place with all their curves and bevels shaped before the planking process begins.

While strip-planking provides plenty of longitudinal strength, something is then needed to provide the athwartships strength and to deal with specific loads, such as those generated by the rig and ballast keel in a sailing boat. For almost all Spirits, McMillan has specified veneers laid diagonally over the outside of the strip planking (which provides an excellent former over which to lay those veneers fairly) – two layers on the smaller boats and four on the larger ones, then a thin layer of glass. “You don’t need any more glass than that,” he said, “and anyway I hate the stuff.” Spooner also favoured the maximum timber/minimum glass approach when he designed the three new sailing boats built by Fairlie Restorations, not least because “the workforce we had were woodworkers, and our clients very much wanted wooden boats.”

Having been involved in various similarly-constructed boats, about 25 years ago Stephens and Waring became concerned about the unbalanced nature of a hull skin that has all the longitudinal strength on the inside and all the transverse strength on the outside. So for a hull with minimal glass, they now favour an inner longitudinal strip-planked layer (“as thin as we can make it without running into difficulties with mould and frame spacing”), a middle layer composed of two veneers with opposing diagonal orientation, and then an outer longitudinal strip-planked layer. They also favour a system with relatively thick longitudinal strip-planking and no veneers, sheathed inside and out with several layers of structural glass and epoxy.

There are various solutions to the localised loads produced on a sailing boat, which McMillan describes as “the base of the mast trying to drive its way through the bottom of the boat, the chainplates trying to rip their way up out of the hull, and 10 or 15 feet down, 20 tons of lead trying to waggle its way off the bottom of the hull.” Jones – who designed the 46ft (14m) wood epoxy *Meteor* for himself in 2006 and still owns her – likes the idea of putting vertical external veneers in way of the ballast keel rather than diagonal ones, and of a very heavy layer of glass over the keel area, so that the ballast keel flange doesn’t dig into the wood. Spirit Yachts went through a phase with their larger boats of fitting fabricated stainless-steel webs inside the hull to take these loads but they now do so with carbonfibre, which, of course, saves considerable weight. On some boats, they also incorporate layers of carbonfibre between the laminates of the ring frames for additional stiffness. Without the

PHOTO: RICHARD LANGDON

carbonfibre, the frames would have to be significantly larger which, apart from anything else, would encroach on the internal space.

Stephens and Waring have also moved on from metal reinforcing structures. They particularly like a product called G10 which is an epoxy/glass laminate manufactured in flat sheets which they have specified as a top layer for keel floors, to act like the top of an I-beam. While they like to take advantage of the ease with which such modern products bond to timber, they are wary of the difficulty of combining carbonfibre with wood "because the carbon is so much stiffer than anything else that it's associated with," said Stephens. "But if you ask the carbon to do a particular job within a wood matrix, you can avoid those challenges."

Powerboats, of course, don't have such localised loading but they typically need to be able to cope with significantly more pounding on their forward underwater sections. On the Spirit powerboats, McMillan favours single layers of carbonfibre inside and outside the timber hull, whereas Stephens Waring tend to address the problem with additional framing. "With big engine stringers and so on, power boats lend themselves quite well to longitudinal framing systems that work very well in stiffening the bottom," said Stephens.

Both Hoek Design and Dykstra Naval Architects have a lot of experience in designing metal boats, both aluminium and steel. Both these materials would normally be more expensive than wood epoxy and, of the two, steel would normally be the cheaper. It would

Bios of the featured designers

After graduating from Southampton College of Technology where he had studied yacht design, in 1977 **Andrew Wolstenholme** set up his own business in Norfolk and has worked by himself ever since.

Gerard Dykstra studied aerodynamics before starting his own company in 1969 and then producing his first yacht design six years later. He semi-retired in 2003 at which point Thys Nikkels – who had studied naval architecture before becoming Gerard's first employee in 1991 – took over Dykstra Naval Architects which now has a total of eight naval architects.

After gaining a degree in European history, **Bob Stephens** then had an informal education in yacht design before going to work at Brooklin Boatyard in the early '90s, first as a boatbuilder and then in the design office. There he met Paul Waring who had studied composite and mechanical engineering and then yacht design. In 2011 they both left Brooklin to form Stephens Waring Yacht Design where three other designers now work with them.

With a degree in fine art, in 1993 **Sean McMillan** co-founded Spirit Yachts for which he was the in-house designer up until his recent semi-retirement. However, he still works as a consultant for the company. **Julian Weatherill** joined the company as Production & Design Director in early 2023.

After studying naval architecture at Newcastle University, **Paul Spooner** worked for various marine companies – including Fairlie Restorations where he was Design Director – before starting Paul Spooner Design in 2016. He now employs two other designers.

As soon as he left Glasgow University where he had studied naval architecture in the early 1970s, **Stephen Jones** set up his own business and has worked by himself ever since.

After studying naval architecture in his native Holland, **Andre Hoek** went to work for C&C Yachts in Canada. He returned home in 1980, and after working for an offshore drilling platforms transport firm, in 1986 he started Hoek Design which now employs eight naval architects and three interior designers.

Above: The 90m *Athena* was designed by Dykstra Naval Architects and has an aluminium hull

also normally be heavier, although Thys Nikkels says that above a certain size – albeit he is talking about 90m (295ft) plus – the weight difference is negligible. “This is because to achieve an adequate longitudinal strength, the hull thickness of a big aluminium boat has to be increased a lot,” he said. Unlike wood epoxy hulls, steel and aluminium hulls can incorporate integral tanks for fuel, fresh water and black water, which therefore effectively don’t take up so much space; and these two metals are also much more suitable, from the impact resistance point of view, than any alternatives for voyaging to colder climates where there may be icebergs.

Many readers of this magazine will be aware that the term “composite” once meant carvel timber planking on steel frames, and more recently a glassfibre hull with a timber deck. But latterly the term has come to mean glassfibre and resin construction but with a more sophisticated make-up than normal glassfibre, and often incorporating carbonfibre. Without doubt this is the best construction method if the priority is to achieve the lightest weight and best performance, and is used for the majority of racing boats today, whether they are SoT boats or not. For instance, all America’s Cup yachts and those taking part in the Vendée Globe round-the-world race are built of carbonfibre composites, while in the SoT world the new Eagle 46 – designed by Hoek and built by Leonardo Yachts – is available in carbonfibre composite or vinylester foam sandwich, and the plumb-stem, full carbonfibre *Hetairos* and *Perseverance* “represent in our office the pinnacle of the SoT pilot cutters we have designed,” said Dykstra.

Carbonfibre composite construction also has its advantages for cruising boats. Stephens Waring have recently completed the designs for a 68ft (20.7m) cruising boat for which they initially specified a more traditional glassfibre with perhaps some carbonfibre reinforcements in key areas. But when the intended builder, James Betts Enterprises, suggested that it wouldn’t be much more expensive to do it all in carbonfibre, the plans changed. “The boat will be thoroughly equipped for cruising with all the heavy amenities such as dishwashers and washing machines and air conditioners and all that stuff,” said Stephens, “so it was very nice to save a few thousand pounds’ weight in the hull construction in order to accommodate them!”

One other consideration in terms of the choice of hull material is almost certain to be an increasingly important one, and that is sustainability. Aluminium and steel hulls are relatively easy to recycle, but while it might be supposed that timber hulls could also be recycled, the presence of epoxy in the layers makes that extremely difficulty. “I think it is more likely that wood hulls would be burnt,” said Hoek, “but for composite construction, there are now companies that are starting to recycle carbonfibe windmill blades, so there is potential for that with yachts as well.”

Next month – underwater hull shapes, rigs and design

Below: The Dykstra Naval Architects team at their office in Amsterdam

PHOTO: JOLANDA VAN DER LINDEN

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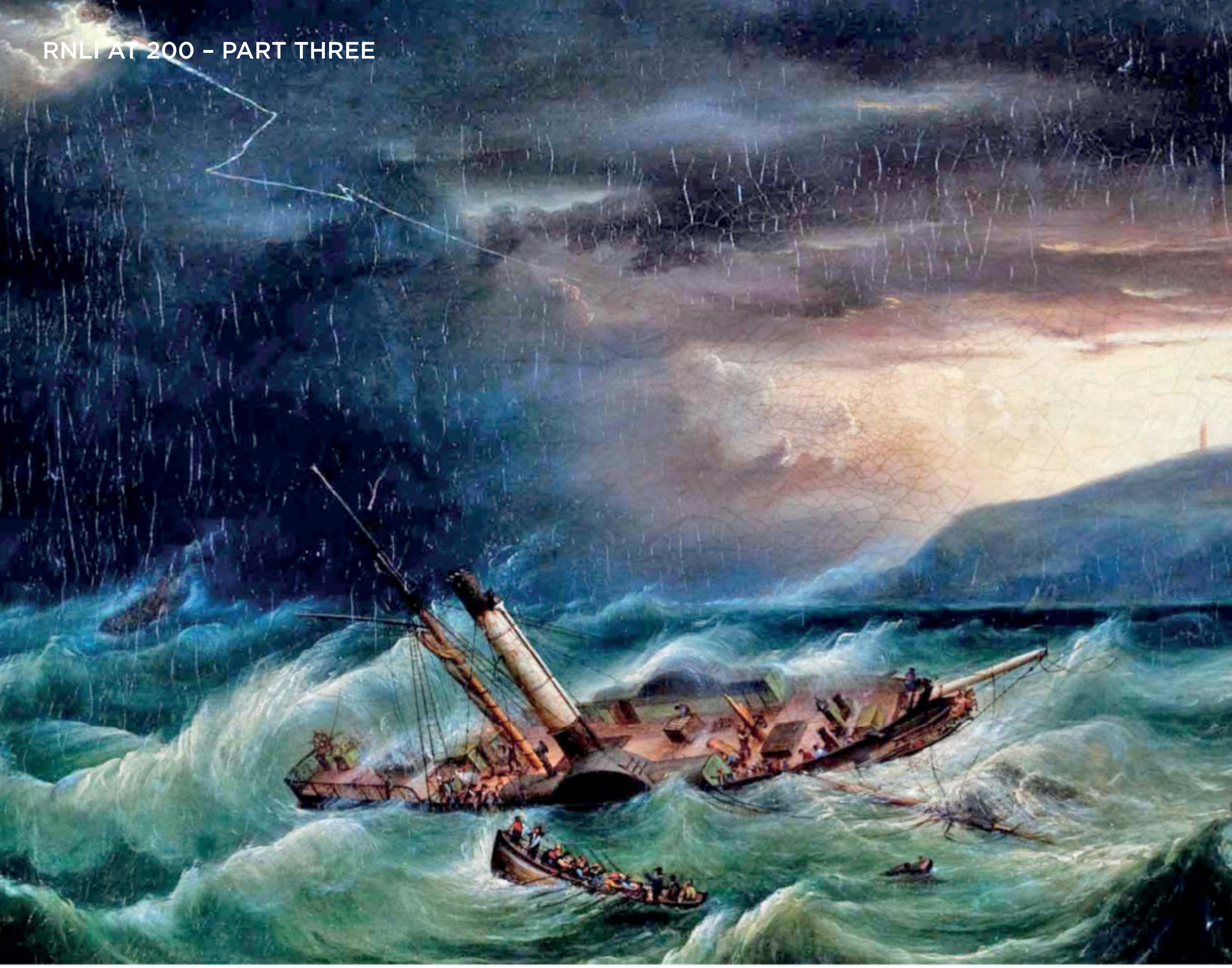

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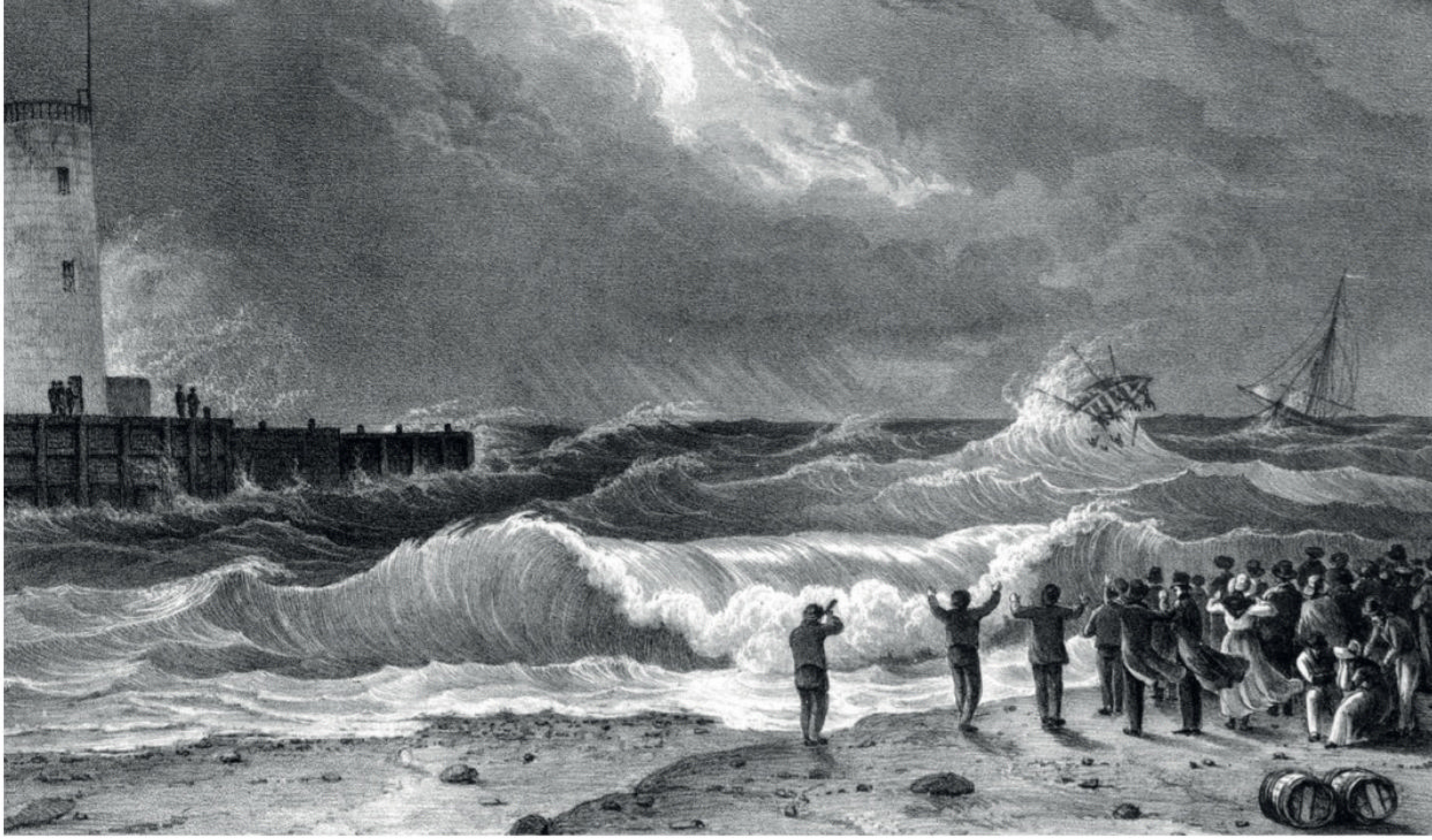
In our third and final instalment on 200 years of the RNLI, we remember some of the greatest rescues and disasters

WORDS DAN HOUSTON

EMOTIONAL RESCUE



Facing page: Founder of the RNLI Sir William Hillary was a lifeboatman himself and, at the age of 60, attended the wreck of *St George* in 1830

Above: The moment in 1836 when a huge wave caught the lifeboat as it left Scarborough, throwing 10 of the 14 crew to their deaths. The sloop *John*, which they went to rescue, later dragged onto rocks and her three crew were saved

A few years after Britain's lifeboat service was founded in 1824, the man on whose ideas it was based was involved in a spectacular rescue himself. Sir William Hillary was coxswain of the newly-built lifeboat at Douglas when, late on the stormy night of 19 November 1830, he and 13 volunteers rowed out to rescue the 22 crew of the mail packet paddle steamer *St George*, which had struck St Mary's Rock about 400m north of the harbour entrance. While trying to manoeuvre close to the ship the lifeboat struck the rocks herself, breaking six oars and smashing the rudder. Then she upended throwing Sir William (who couldn't swim) and several crew into the turbulent sea. He and others grabbed ropes and were hauled on deck of the *St George* by her crew; Sir William had broken his chest bone and six ribs – he was 60 years old. Cutting away her broken mast and rigging, the lifeboat got back alongside the paddle steamer and took everyone off. Rowing home with just two oars and 36 men the lifeboat was overturned and they had to be rescued by two other harbour boats while the *St George* broke up in the heavy seas. No-one was lost.

Sir William was awarded his third gold medal in this rescue, but despite being badly hurt he was soon back on the lifeboat, saving crews of the schooner *Mary* and the brig *Erin* in 1831, and then 54 crew from the large ship *Parkfield* stranded in a southeasterly gale in Douglas Bay in 1832 – believed to be his last "shout". With other local volunteers he'd helped save 300 lives. The stories and selfless heroism of the lifeboat volunteers had begun to erode the self-serving opportunism of coastal salvage companies and the somewhat mythical murderous intent of the "wreckers".

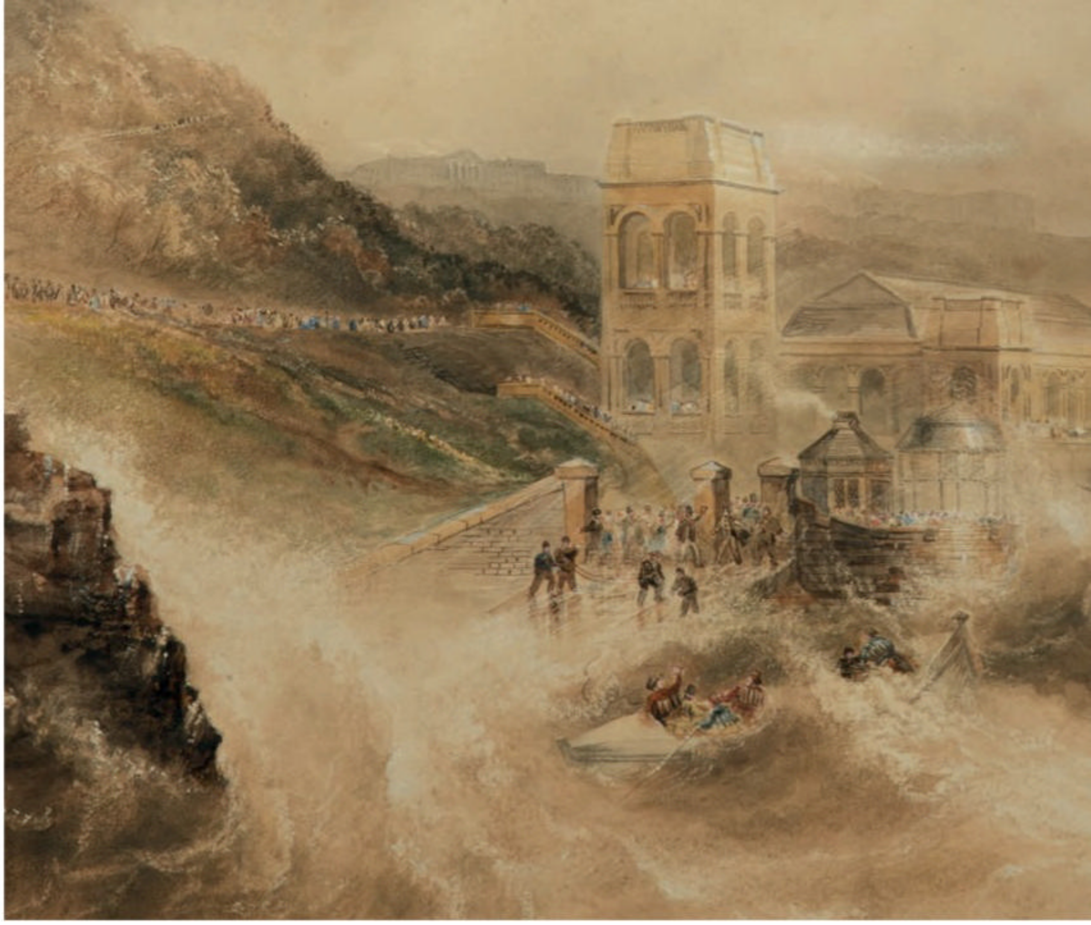
Over the next few decades the RNLI would slowly become more established, influencing other nations to follow suit. First Holland (in November 1924) then Belgium, Denmark and Sweden had government services before France in 1865 established a volunteer service. America began with a volunteer service in 1878 but merged it with the Coastguard in 1915. Canada (1880) had a government service while Australia and New Zealand had volunteer lifeboats from the 1860s, if not a "national" service in those decades.

Just what it is that makes men and women get out of bed on stormy nights to answer the clanging lifeboat station bell, the now-disused maroon or the pager, to head out to sea to rescue strangers – when other seafarers would be seeking port, remains one of the joyous mysteries of our species. The notion of selfless rescue wasn't new, but to nationalise it with a code of conduct, establish stations, training and raise money, freely donated, for boats that can now cost £2.5m, is something rather extraordinary. And yet the RNLI has 5,700 volunteer crew for its 448 boats.

Thankfully, design and gear have made life at sea much safer for the rescuers. But it was not always so. In November of its founding year, 1824, five of the eight Great Yarmouth lifeboatmen were lost attempting to rescue a stricken vessel.

Worse was to come. During a northeasterly snowstorm-gale on 17 February 1836, the lifeboat at Scarborough was launched when the sloop *John* anchored with distress signals in South Bay off the harbour entrance, unable to make it in. Despite the misgivings of several seamen, who doubted a rescue would be effective in the notoriously dangerous shoals of the roadstead, 14 men of the town set out in the lifeboat, heading for the sloop. To the horror of onlookers, the lifeboat capsized when it was hit by a huge wave, with 10 men thrown out. The men were quickly washed out to sea on the ebb and, weighed down by heavy boots and clothing, quickly

PHOTO: MANX HERITAGE



disappeared beneath the waves. Three men had secured themselves to arm ropes within the boat, which was now wedged inverted on a sandbank, and were able to breathe through her draining pipes, while a fourth climbed on the upturned hull. They were eventually rescued, as the tide went out, by a human chain. The sloop meanwhile dragged onto rocks in Cayton Bay – her three crew were rescued by Manby Mortar lines, fired from the shore.

They were perhaps lucky. The *John* was one of nearly 40 shipwrecks around the British coast that day, with the loss of a few dozen lives. The Scarborough lifeboat was put back into service. And in April 1861, Scarborough, which had had a lifeboat station since 1801, joined the RNLI.

As part of that, the station received a new 32ft (9.8m) self-righting lifeboat: the *Amelia*. She gained approval during local trials but, on 2 November 1861, there was further tragedy for the fashionable northern spa town when the schooner *Coupland* foundered close to the shore in South Bay after trying to enter the harbour. The lifeboat, with 10 oarsmen and the coxswain, put out and reached the *Coupland* but the waves were so great that one of her crew – Thomas Clayburn – was hurled from the boat. He managed to reach shore with a lifebelt thrown to him.

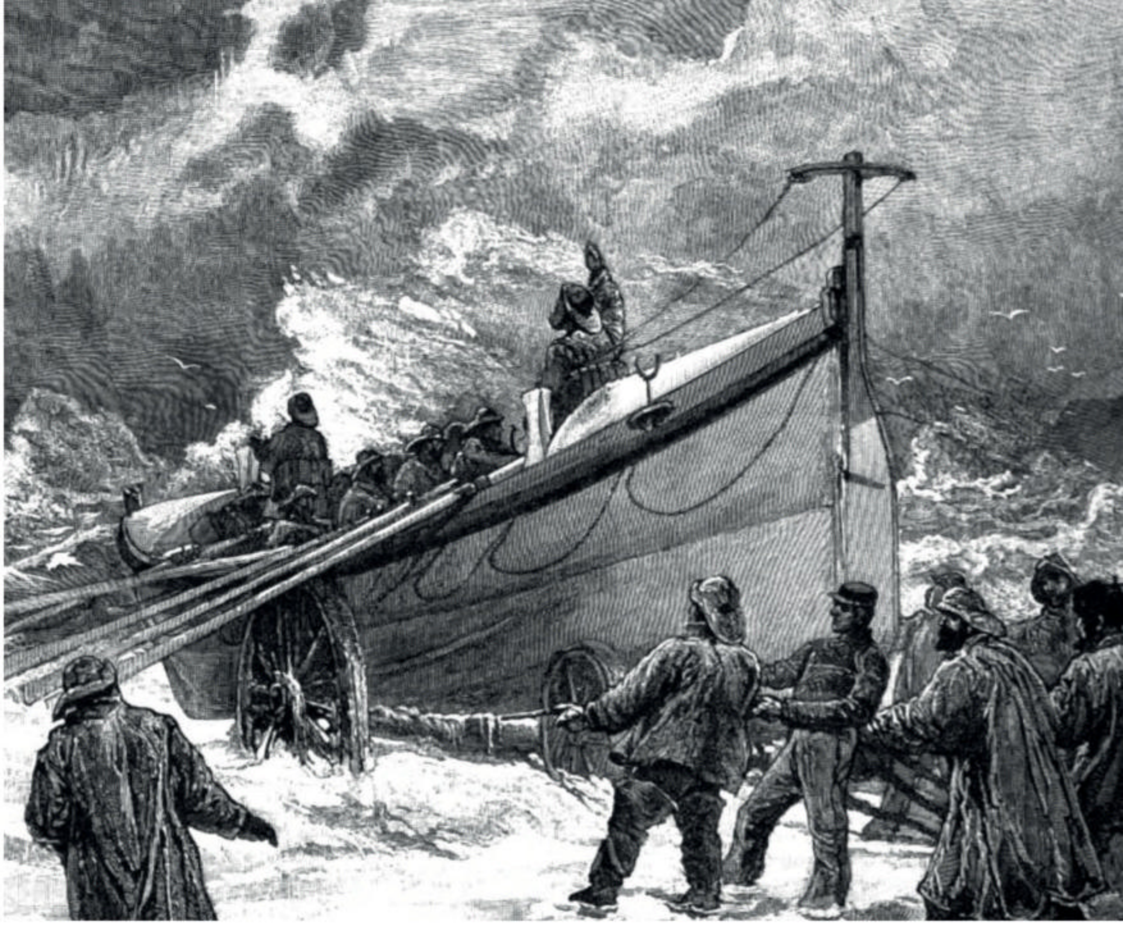
The *Amelia* was now being thrown against the sea wall by waves strong enough to have dislodged some of its stone blocks. Three more men were hurled out – one was crushed to death between the lifeboat and sea wall, one climbed back aboard, while one was swept ashore. Ropes thrown to the lifeboat helped move it along the wall before the crew then abandoned her while they still had the strength to reach the beach. A further crewman was lost while three helpers in the surf were also dragged out by the waves and drowned. The crew of the *Coupland* were brought ashore by ropes fired across the vessel. The dreadful mordancy of the scene has been painted several times, with the stricken vessels being dashed against the genteel Italianate architecture of Scarborough's seafront in front of the helpless, horrified crowds.

With the prevailing winds in Britain being from the west, you might think that the east coast was more protected but it has certainly had its share of storms and shipwreck. Earlier in the year (1861) on 9 February, a huge storm wrecked more than 200 vessels up and down the coast, with Lloyds recording over 150 of them. Sixty colliers were lost in Tees Bay alone. Lifeboats everywhere were busy but the Whitby lifeboat is the one most remembered (though her name is unlisted).

Above left: Henry Freeman was the sole survivor of the Whitby lifeboat disaster in February 1861 which killed 12 of his crewmates. He was also the only one wearing one of the newfangled cork lifejackets, introduced in 1854

Above right: The wreck of the *Coupland* is perhaps the most painted scene in RNLI history as the lifeboat was dashed against the sea wall at Scarborough in 1861

Right: The Lytham lifeboat *Charles Biggs* rescued 12 crew from the barque *Mexico* in December 1886. Sadly 27 crew of two other lifeboats were lost in the same rescue – the greatest loss of crew ever suffered by the RNLI in one day



Above: Typical lifeboat carriage launching scene of the Victorian era, from a series etched by Charles Joseph Staniland RI (1838-1916)

The day began when seven members of the lifeboat crew 'borrowed' a beach coble to save the crew of the ship *John and Anne*. Then in the lifeboat they saved the schooner *Gamma* which had run aground, next the *Clara*, having a glass of grog before rowing out again to save the crews of the *Utility* and *Roe* – all before lunch. By 2pm with the gale at full force, the lifeboat crew decided they could not rescue any more but when a sixth vessel, a collier called the *Merchant* ran ashore, they left the harbour once more. However as they manoeuvred towards the stricken vessel a huge wave capsized the lifeboat throwing the crew into the water. Sadly all but one, Henry Freeman, who was then on his first shout and wearing a cork lifejacket, perished.

The cork lifejacket was designed by Captain Ward and introduced across the RNLI in 1854.

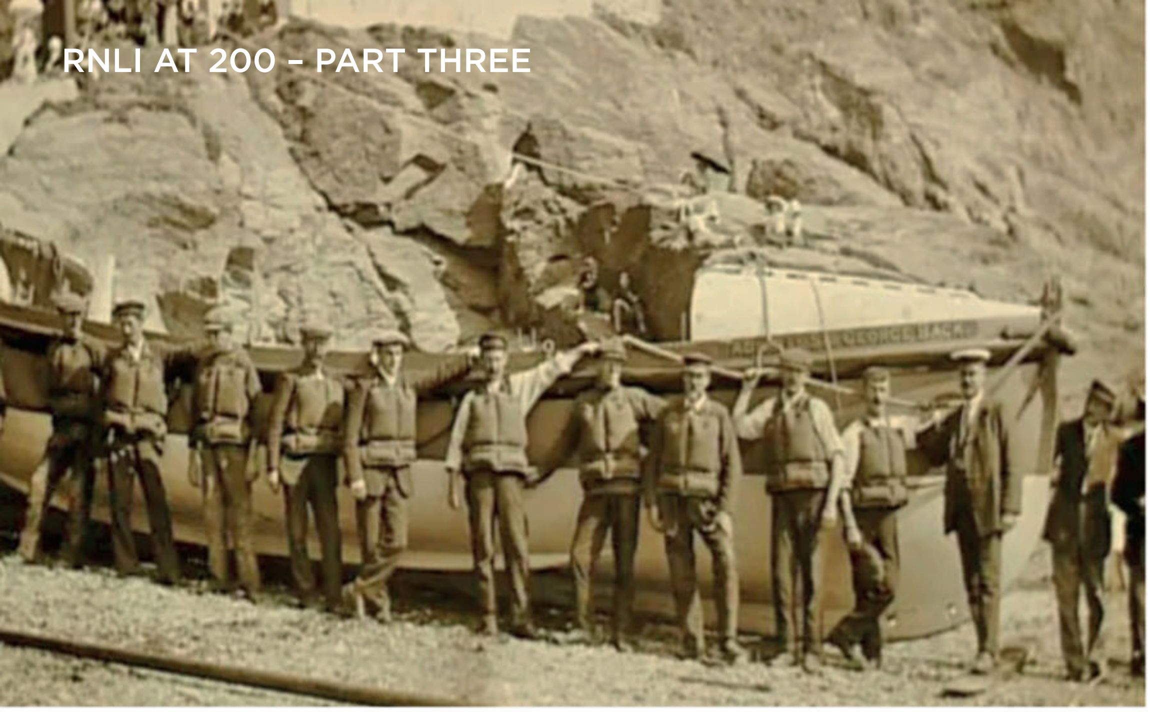
It had been a terrible day. Down the coast at Blakeney another boat manned by local fishermen put out to rescue the barque *Favourite*. Again a huge wave upended the boat and all nine crew were drowned.

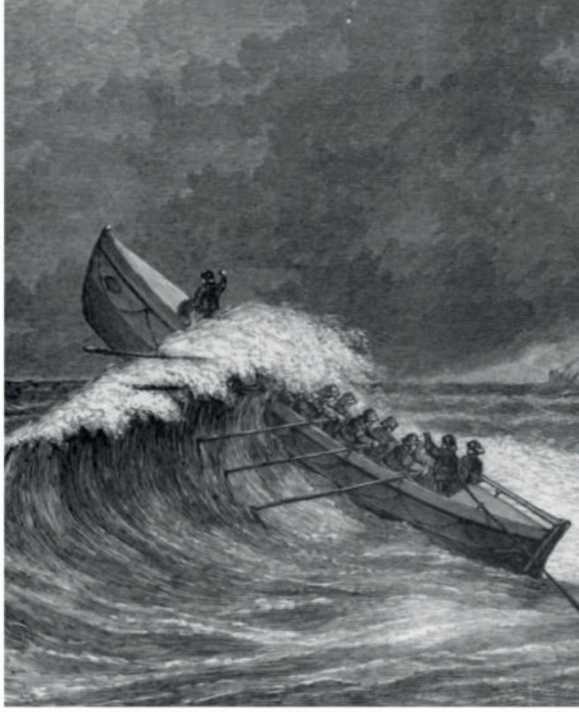
It has to be said that lifebelts were not immediately popular, many feeling they were too cumbersome and bulky to be effective. Consequently their adoption was more gradual than you might expect.

In 1866 this was highlighted again by the tragic loss of 13 lifeboatmen from Gorleston, near Great Yarmouth, who were in one of two boats which put out to sea in a SSW gale on January 13 to assist a sailing vessel in distress. One of the boats, *Rescuer*, struck a sandbar and inverted, with her crew of 16 underneath. The other boat, anchored and veered down to the *Rescuer*, saving four of the men who were able to escape, but 12 others, including the coxswain, were lost. One of the rescued men died a few days later. The incident widowed nine wives and orphaned 22 children. Reports at the time mentioned the men wearing their ganseys, oilskins and leather seaboots, but not lifejackets. This could be because the Gorleston men were not part of the RNLI (at that time) but part of one of the many companies of beachmen who earned salvage money from vessels in distress.

Unluckily the *Rescuer* capsized again, close to harbour in December the following year, with the loss of seven of her crew, as well as 19 just rescued from a vessel. While lifejackets aren't mentioned in this case, it would seem likely that they were not yet being worn by the beachmen.

Lifebelts were not a guarantee of survival. In January 1881, the RNLB Abraham Thomas of Yarmouth capsized when on service to the schooner *Guiding Star* to rescue the mate, who was alone on board. She was struck by a heavy sea and lost six out





of her 10 crewmen, as well as the unfortunate mate. Lifebelts are not mentioned in the reports.

Lifeboat men are shown wearing their lifebelts in contemporary paintings of the greatest loss of crew suffered by the RNLI on one day – December 10 1886 in the Ribble estuary. Twenty seven lifeboatmen lost their lives when three RNLI beach stations were involved rescuing crew of the German barque *Mexico*, which fired its distress rockets as it ran aground on the sands.

Boats from St Anne's, Lytham and then Southport were launched. Tragically, the St Anne's and Southport boats were capsized with the drowning of 27 of their 29 crewmen. The Lytham lifeboat, *Charles Biggs*, was new and on its maiden rescue, and saved the *Mexico*'s 12 crewmen.

The tragedy caused widespread grief but also spurred support for the RNLI. Lifeboat design was once again questioned: with her four water ballast tanks the *Charles Biggs* was considered to have better self-righting qualities. The prominent naval architect George Lennox Watson was retained by the RNLI the following year and his first design, *Edith & Annie*, was a replacement boat for Southport in 1888. St Annes received a Watson sailing and pulling lifeboat as well.

Charles Macara – a businessman on the St Annes lifeboat committee, also realised that new lifeboats were expensive, and that relying on donations from the wealthy few restricted their introduction. In October 1891 he organised the first Lifeboat Saturday in Manchester, towing the new Southport and St Anne's boats through the streets with volunteers collecting money from the public. It was a huge success, raising £5,454 1s 4d. It sparked other 'Saturdays' across the realm and raised awareness inland of the important work of the RNLI.

Lifeboat stories were becoming the stuff of legend, and were often reported immediately across every newspaper as well as in journals. The hardy bravery of the lifeboatmen was in no doubt, but even so, some launches stand out for their sheer grit.

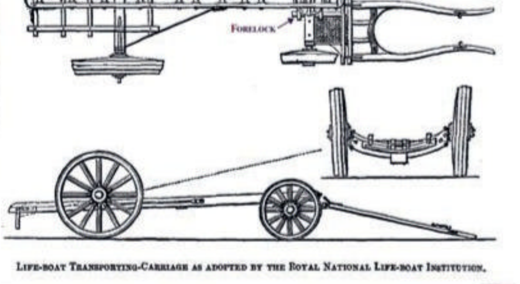
Possibly the best of these is the 13-mile drag of the lifeboat *Louisa* from her Lynmouth station to Porlock Weir to aid the *Forrest Hall*, a 1,900-tonne sailing ship that was drifting ashore. It was made overnight on 12 January, 1899. Bad weather prevented a launch at Lynmouth so it was decided to take the lifeboat overland, including over the 980ft (298m) Countisbury Hill, with a stretch at a 1:4 gradient.

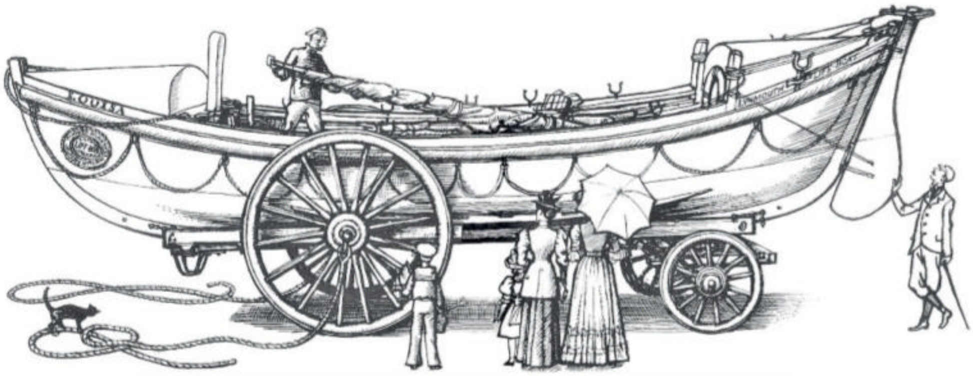
A hundred volunteers and 18 horses helped to get the 34ft 3in (10.4m) lifeboat up the hill, but the drag down was even more difficult with the lifeboat having to clear the way – even taking down a garden wall at one point. They reached Porlock at 6.30am after an 11-hour ordeal. The *Louisa* was launched immediately and joined two tugs that had arrived to tow the ship across the Bristol Channel to Barry. The lifeboat escorted them and ended up in Barry for the night,

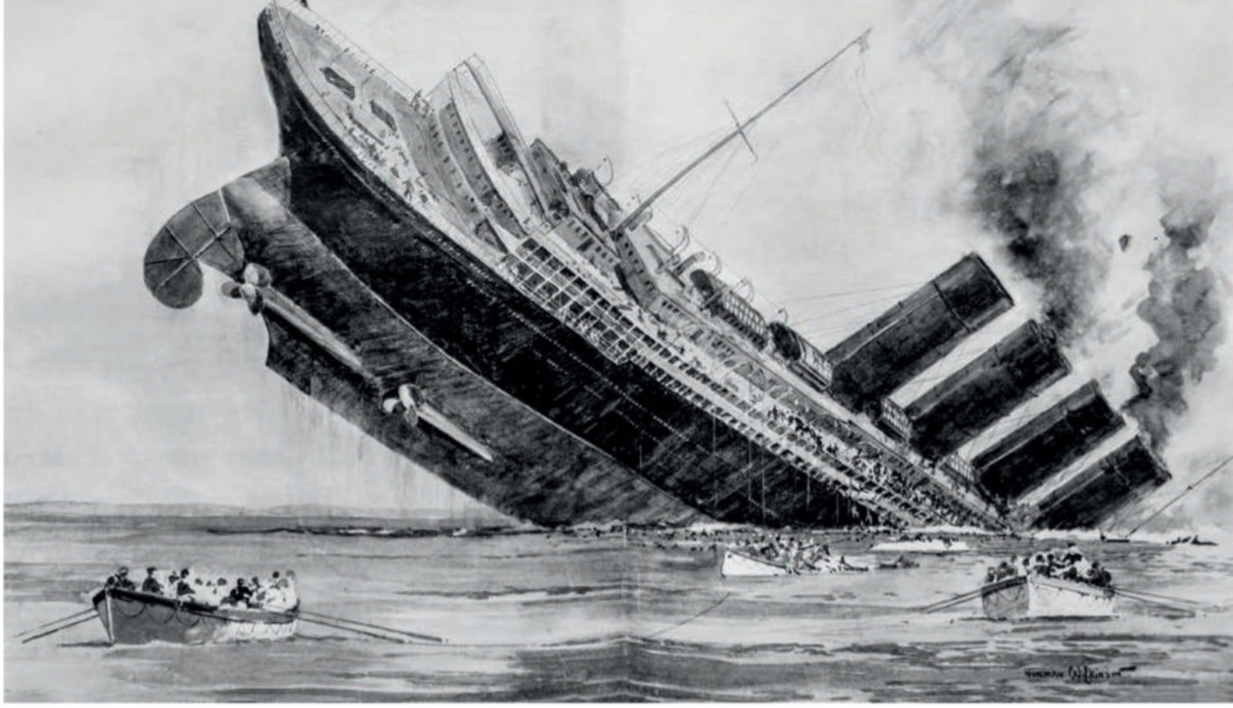
Above left: The crew and boat of the Lizard RNLI station, one of three boats rescuing 382 passengers and 141 crew from the *Suevic* in 1907 – the largest ever number of lives saved by the RNLI in one incident

Above right: A Victorian press image of the lifeboat and her doughty crew bravely putting out in stormy conditions

Below: Victorian lifeboats came with a two-part, horse-drawn carriage, launched into surf using ropes and pulleys attached to the large wheels


Forelock
Life-boat Transporting-Carriage as adopted by the Royal National Life-boat Institution.





before getting a partial tow back towards Lynmouth the following day. They arrived home just before noon.

The greatest number of lives saved by the RNLI in one incident was the *Suevic* rescue in 1907. *Suevic* was a steamship coming from Australia that ran aground on 17 March on rocks a mile off Lizard Point in Cornwall. Over 16 hours, four lifeboats from Porthleven, Lizard, Cadgwith and Coverack with 60 volunteers rowed back and forth in rough conditions, rescuing 382 passengers and 141 crew.

The *Suevic* was one of three great RNLI rescues in the early 20th century. In October 1914, five lifeboats rescued 140 people from the hospital ship *Rohilla*, which had run aground off Whitby. And in May the following year two lifeboats from Ireland were involved in the tragedy of the *Lusitania* which sank after being torpedoed by a German submarine 11 miles off the coast. Having received the distress call, Queenstown's motorless lifeboat was towed to the scene by one of several tugs that attended the disaster, while 14 volunteers from Courtmacsherry rowed their lifeboat the entire 12-mile journey – in three and a half hours. It was an appalling scene: 1,191 people lost their lives. There were 761 survivors. The Courtmacsherry boat still lays a wreath on the site every year.

The rescue formed part of the wartime service of the RNLI from 1914 to 1918 when lifeboats launched 1,808 times, saving 5,332 lives.

Above: The tragedy of the *Lusitania*, sunk by German torpedo in May 1915, with 1,191 dead

Below left: RNLB *TGB*, of Longhope, disappeared with all hands in March 1969 off the Orkney Skerries with the loss of eight men

Below right: In December 1981 the RNLB *Solomon Browne* was lost in hurricane-strength winds with 16 dead including her eight crew. Hers was the last tragedy where the RNLI lost an entire crew in one incident

The RNLI was back at war in 1940, sending 19 lifeboats (two with their RNLI crews) as part of the 850-strong fleet of Little Ships that helped rescue 338,000 troops from the shallow beaches of Dunkirk.

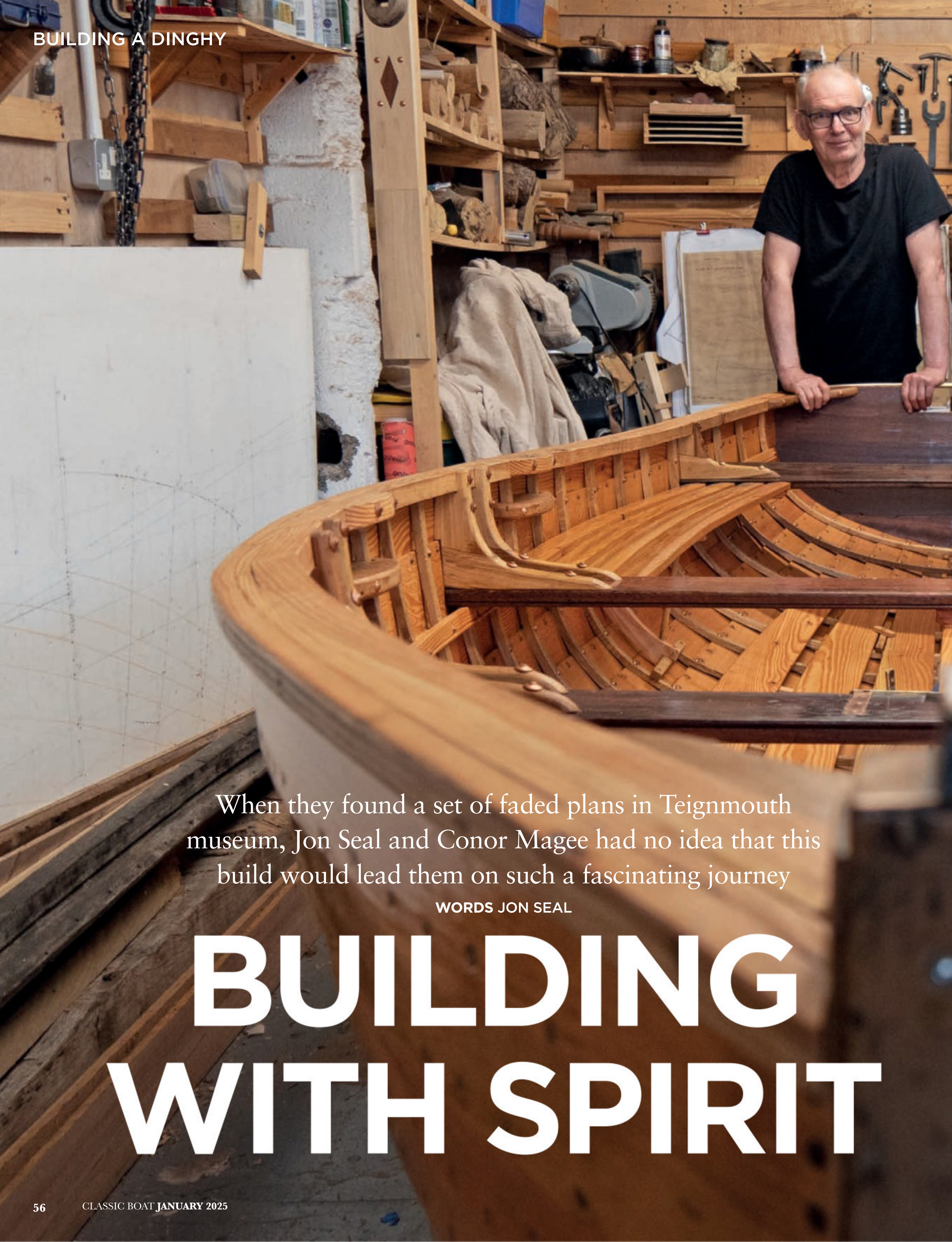
During World War Two, the service launched 3,760 times saving 6,376 lives – more than in the 18 years preceding the war. The RNLI saved many airmen, allied and enemy. While some stations closed, like Southwold (Suffolk) and Walmer and Hythe (Kent), those of the Channel Islands fell into enemy hands, though the St Helier boat launched five times, saving 35 lives.

With better boats and kit the RNLI has become safer over the years. Since 1947, some 60 crew have been lost, with the tragedies of the Mumbles (1947), Broughty Ferry (1969), Longhope (1969) and Penlee (1981) being the worst, with total loss of crews.

It seems losses never deter lifeboat crews, however. RNLI women and men are at sea every day, making often small but effective rescues to boaters and others who get into difficulties on the water or being trapped by the tide. Doing a very quick search on RNLI shouts to yachts in July of 2024 for instance, reveals lifeboats out on at least 20 of 31 days, carrying out a wide-ranging number of 'rescues'.

We have barely scratched the surface here on what the RNLI has achieved in its two centuries so far. There is a lot more to be found online searching the Institution's website or copies of the *Lifeboat* magazine archive for instance.

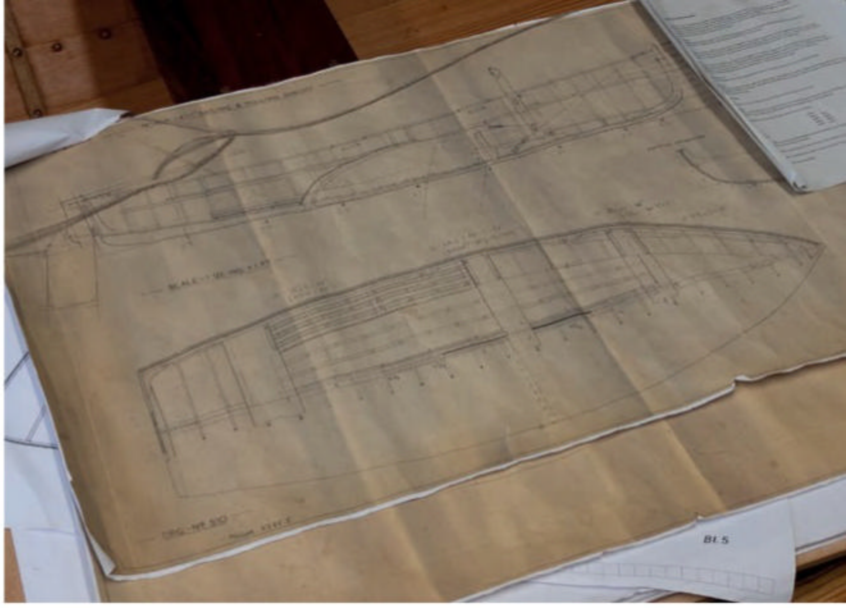
PHOTO/PAINTING: NORMAN WILKINSON CBE RI



BUILDING WITH SPIRIT

When they found a set of faded plans in Teignmouth museum, Jon Seal and Conor Magee had no idea that this build would lead them on such a fascinating journey

WORDS JON SEAL



THE SET UP

I knew I wanted to build a clinker boat in the traditional way. I had heard about the Morgan Giles boatyard at Teignmouth, a place where some of the finest wooden boats had been crafted under the watchful eye of Frank Morgan Giles, boatbuilder and designer in the first half of the 20th century. And so, I found myself in Teignmouth Museum, studying the faded plans of a 14ft 7in (4.44m) sailing dinghy, originally built in 1950. It was just what I was looking for, a local clinker boat with history and so I persuaded my mate Conor that this was the one.

We started lofting on a wet September day, laying two sheets of 8x4 ply on the workshop floor and painting them with thick white emulsion before drawing out the boat full size. Lofting is a wonderful and quite mystical process. Although tough on the brain, there is an elegance to the way those pencil lines come together. Lofting is about getting to know your craft intimately before you start the serious business of cutting wood.

A few days later, I went to Anton Coaker's timber yard, high up on Dartmoor. As the cattle lowed in the rain, he threw around bulks of timber until the perfect log emerged from the stack, a 90 year-old slab of oak with a gentle sweep which perfectly followed the rocker of the keel.

Back in the workshop, we set about carving the log into a keel. Those winter evenings with the smell of oak and the slice of a sharp edge were a joy. There is something primeval about starting with a tree and it seemed important to honour this. So, with a bin bag of 50 oak saplings, I trundled up to a friend's woodland and planted them to replace the one we had used, ready for the next generation of boatbuilders.

We thought long and hard about the sweeping curve of the stem piece. The original builders would have selected crooks of timber from a stack in the Teignmouth yard but we had no such stack. So, with a little guilt, we buttered epoxy on to thin laths of oak and eased them round a former clamping them into place. Once dry our constructed 'crook' was carefully shaped into the elegant sweep of the bow and attached to the keel. We made a transom from a reclaimed mahogany tabletop and set up all on the strongback. Once the moulds were in place, we could clearly see the shape of our boat in three dimensions for the first time. The workshop was full of boat.

A local timber supplier had some lovely close-grained Douglas fur, so we decided this would be ideal for planking. There was great excitement as we started work on the first garboards. They had to be steamed to get the twist at the hood ends, so time for another modern innovation. With the garboard clamped to the moulds, a tube of clear plastic bag was slid over the end and sealed with a zip tie. With the aid of a wallpaper steamer, it was a case of 'boil in the bag'. After 20 minutes the bag was sliced away and the timber wrapped into the stem like a piece of rubber.

Previous page: Jon Seal and Conor Magee with *Spirit* the day before the launch

Above left: The full scale loftings are used to make moulds for the hull shape

Above right: The original drawings made by Frank Morgan Giles in 1950

Below left: The moulds were set up on the keel and the battens put in place to mark the positions of the planks

Below centre: The tricky business of bending the hot oak ribs to follow the curve of the hull

Once the timber had cooled, it held its new shape and was fine-tuned with a block plane. As the winter wore on, one plank was added to another and, although sometimes a bit of a slog, the hull began to take shape.

DELVING INTO THE HISTORY

I wanted to find out more about the history of our boat. Frank's grand-daughter, Jane Shaddick, is the authority on Morgan Giles history. She arrived at Teignmouth Museum with books and piles of enthusiasm. Brushing the dust from a ledger, she ran her finger down a copperplate list.

"There's your boat, job number 660," she said. "She was built in 1950. Looks like it was when there was a lull in work. They did it between jobs."

"How long did it take?" I asked nervously.

"Nine days."

I didn't like to mention we'd been working on our boat for nine months.

She read on: "She had a name, *Blythe Spirit*."

"Something didn't quite work out with the payment and she was taken back into yard ownership. Then she was sold on to a Mrs Lancaster."

This was becoming exciting. Might I be able to find *Blythe Spirit*?

Above left: The finished timbers in the bow

Above right: The hull interior looking forward

Above (inset): The Morgan Giles workforce in 1949. Trevor Jackson is the smallest apprentice in the back row

Below right: The unique bronze Morgan Giles winch set up on the keel

"No. There's no mention of where Mrs Lancaster lived and after that there's no record."

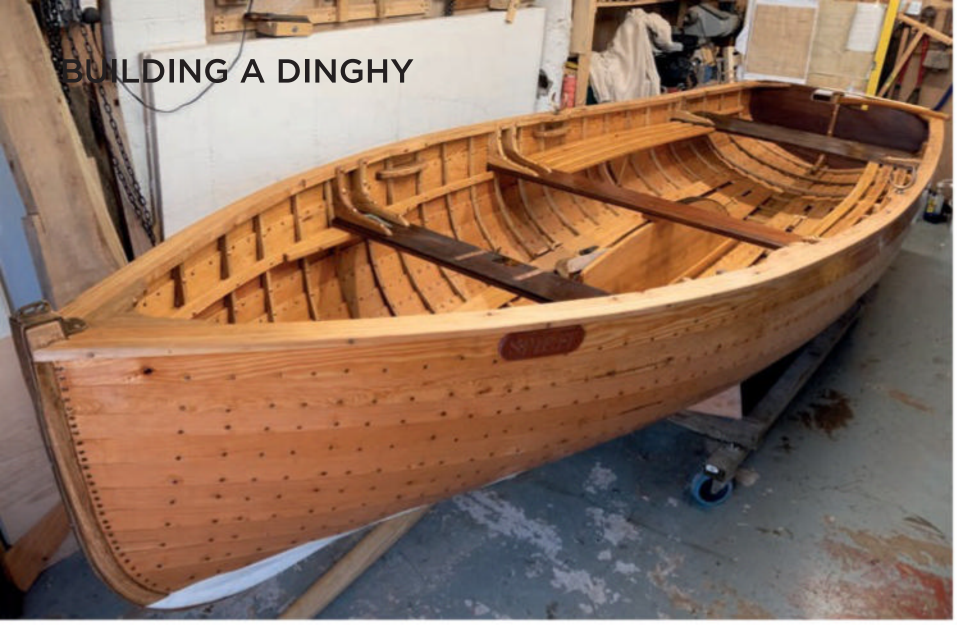
The trail had come to an end. But I couldn't help thinking, is there some broken piece of *Blythe Spirit* in a forgotten field? However, our boat now had an obvious name – *Spirit*.

Jane told us about Trevor Jackson, a remarkable man who, at the splendid age of 91, scampered off the bus and skipped into the workshop. It was a very special day when Trevor cast his eyes over my copper riveting. He picked up a hammer and tapped away at my roves, making a few corrections here and there, as he told us about his apprenticeship at the Morgan Giles yard in 1949.

"You've done a good job there," he said. It was an approval and I beamed.

TIMBERING

The ribs of a clinker boat are called 'timbers' and made from thin laths of green oak. I found a board and ripped it down into one-inch strips. We cooked



Above left: Spirit seen here just before the launch

Above right: The rudder and tiller in place

Below left: Spirit leaves the harbour

Below right: The first few strokes of the oars on the Exe estuary

the oak laths in a steam box for half an hour, fished them out and carefully palmed them into the curve of the hull. Once clamped in place they were fastened with copper nails and roves. Of course, there was snapping, frustration, a little swearing and some mistreatment of workshop walls but after a day's work, *Spirit* looked like a beached whale with a neat line of ribs running the length of her hull.

One evening a bunch of jovial friends turned up. We threaded straps under the boat and with a lot of, 'Your side ok? Down a bit. Not that bit!' we flipped the boat, ready to finish the underside of the hull over the next few weeks.

CENTREPLATE & MORGAN GILES WINCH

With an idle dash of pencil across paper, Frank had drawn out the centreplate. I worked the drawing up to a pattern and sent it to a local steel fabricator. Meanwhile, I built the centreplate case from larch with a capping of salvaged mahogany. A couple of days later, Conor turned up with the centreplate in the boot of his car – a massive lump of very heavy steel. I couldn't believe that something so cumbersome was going to fit into our delicate hull but somehow we managed to wrestle it on to the pivot and hide it within the case.

The Morgan Giles winch is beautifully crafted from bronze and provides the leverage to hoist the heavy centreplate. But where would we get one from? I left a message for Jane. A few days later she called me back.

"My brother wants to see you," she said.

We met Richard Palmer at Nick Gaite's yard and he guided us through the superb restoration of a Morgan Giles carvel racing dinghy. We poured over the workmanship, drinking up every detail as an inspiration for our boat. Just before we left, Richard presented us with a winch.

"Oh, I found it lying round in my garage," he said. "You might as well have it for your boat."

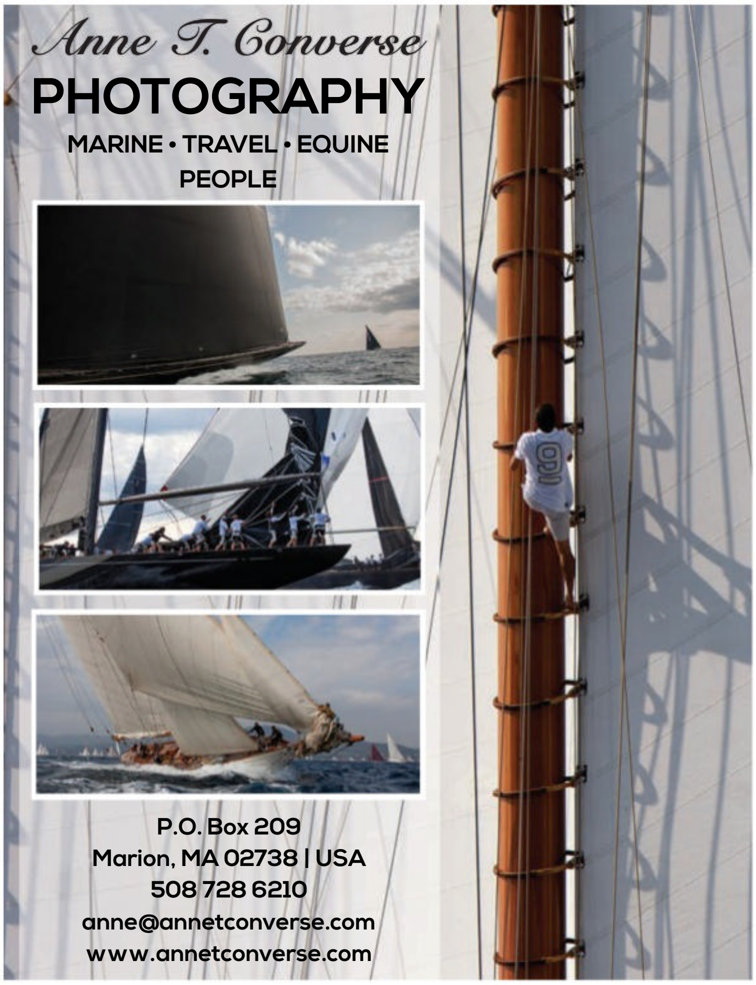
THE LAUNCH

Thwarts were made from repurposed school benches and attached with oak knees. We made soleboards and cut a mast from spruce. But the more we did, the longer the list grew. The dates for the Spring launch passed and summer gathered pace. It seemed like all those hours on the water were slipping away with the tides.

But at last, on a fine afternoon in July we nervously made our way down to Cockwood Harbour, our precious boat wobbling on the trailer. As we waited for the water to come in, there were friends, cameras and jokes.

"Do you reckon, there's enough water under the bridge?" asked Conor.

We eased the trailer down the slipway and our pile of wood and nails slid into the water like she was made for it. *Spirit* was afloat. After a splash of cider across the gunwales, I pushed out the oars and rowed out under the bridge to the estuary. A summer of sailing and adventure lay ahead.



Anne T. Converse

PHOTOGRAPHY

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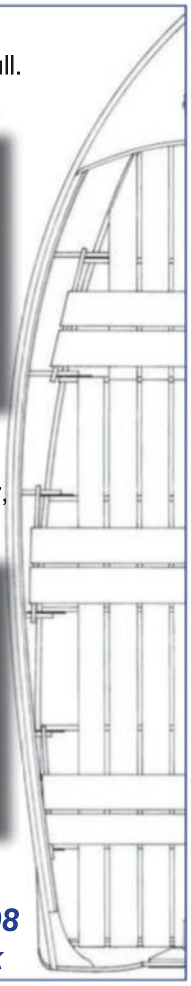

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Tom Cunliffe

Lest we forget

Traditional sailmaking remembered

This morning I visited my sailmaker before breakfast. Pete Sanders of Sanders Sails in Lymington starts work early, so when a rain squall rattled my window at 0530 I gave up on the shut-eye project, brewed a quick mug of tea and shovelled myself into the Volvo with my 'code zero' headsail. The torque-transferring luff rope for the top-down furler had settled in and needed six inches taking off so I could winch it up again for the tight luff we all seek. I'd thought about doing it myself, but opted for the safer option of handing it to the guy who built it.

Pete was in his office when I arrived, working on a sail design while tucking in to a round of buttered toast. As usual we spent half an hour yarning about sailmakers lost in time before I handed over the goods and drove away through the mists of a New Forest that was just waking up.

Pete's loft is always full of sails being built, altered, bagged up to be collected or, for all I know, awaiting their final journey to the bin. Sewing machines chatter discretely while people in knee pads cut sails varying from a tiny staysail they once produced for my daughter's Harrison Butler yawl, via a genoa for an Admiral's cupper, to the main course for a full-on square rigger. The spotless floor is a far cry from the first sail loft I visited in the early 1970s.

Regular readers of this column will know that my early cruising yacht carried a full-sized gaff cutter rig that spread a flax mainsail of impressive dimensions. My wife and I were living onboard on the south coast preparing for a voyage to South America when it became clear that the sail could do with a bit of fettling. In these days of synthetic materials, it isn't difficult to decide whether or not to write off a sail. Canvas was different. It was prone to rot if left wet for too long with the limited air circulation brought about by a poor stow. Its hemp bolt ropes were of great structural importance and these, together with the hand-worked cringles that stood off them, could sometimes deteriorate before the cloth itself. Stitching generally passed the test of time because it bedded into the material, unlike the equivalent on unforgiving Dacron which always remains proud. The result is that the modern sail can suffer chafe along a seam and let go, while its historic predecessor did not.

My sail looked well the right side of its sell-by date, but with a pending trip to Rio and beyond, we decided to have it checked over by a higher authority. The question was, where and by whom? All the local sailmakers had long since given up on canvas and gone 'Terylene'. Our sail was rumoured to have been made originally by Jim Lawrence far away in Essex, but that seemed a fair trek in our ailing Citroen 2CV. So far as we could ascertain, the only vessels that regularly used flax sails were the sailing barges of the Thames, a speciality for Jim who had cut his teeth on them as a young skipper back in the 1950s. Nonetheless, there had to be barge sailmakers in London which, years before the M25, was a lot closer than East Anglia.

How we found Les George I simply don't recall. He didn't answer any telephone calls. In fact, I'm not sure he had a phone at all. His address was uncertain, but an old hand in the Ship Inn had heard of him and was pretty sure we'd find him in the Royal Docks at Silvertown in East London. That was 80 miles away. The old 2CV did 50 miles to the gallon, so the return trip looked like costing around £2.50. We removed the back seats, unbent the main and staggered up to the car with it. Flax was heavy even when dry. Don't ask about the weight when wet. The car gave a sickening lurch as we dropped in the sail, but it started on the button and away we went up the A3.

After negotiating the wilds of Whitechapel, we finally arrived at the King George V dock. One or two ships were unloading, but the place was clearly past its glory days. In the far corner rose the towering topmast of a Thames barge, its bob flying in the southwest wind. Alongside the black hull, looking distinctly lonely, stood a small wooden hut. Inside was Les George.

Les appeared to be as old as his shed. He was sitting on a traditional sailmaker's bench in the dim light filtering through a filthy window. On his big right hand was a roping palm while across his knee stretched the tanned mainsail of the barge outside. It seemed to fill the room. He didn't stop work to talk with us, he just kept on roping that enormous sail while we outlined the purpose of our visit.

"You got the sail?" he asked. We affirmed that we had.

"Drop it in the corner behind the door," he said. "Come back next Friday and don't be late. I don't work weekends."

Taking what an evangelist might call the leap of faith, we did as we were told and drove away, our senses reeling with the scents of tar, tallow and the indefinable but unmistakable, rounded smell of fresh flax canvas. We returned to Les on the Friday as directed and the sail was ready. His work served us well for thousands of miles in fair weather and foul.

We never saw Les George again. The next time I visited Docklands the ships were gone, so were the docks and so was he. Aircraft were taking off from London City Airport; in the neighbouring Boat Show at Excel a new generation of sailors had no idea that men like Les had ever existed, but Pete Sanders hasn't forgotten. Neither should we.

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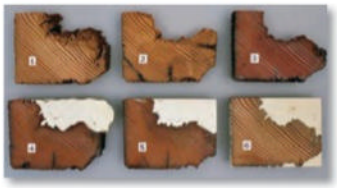

Keith Jones wrote May 2016:

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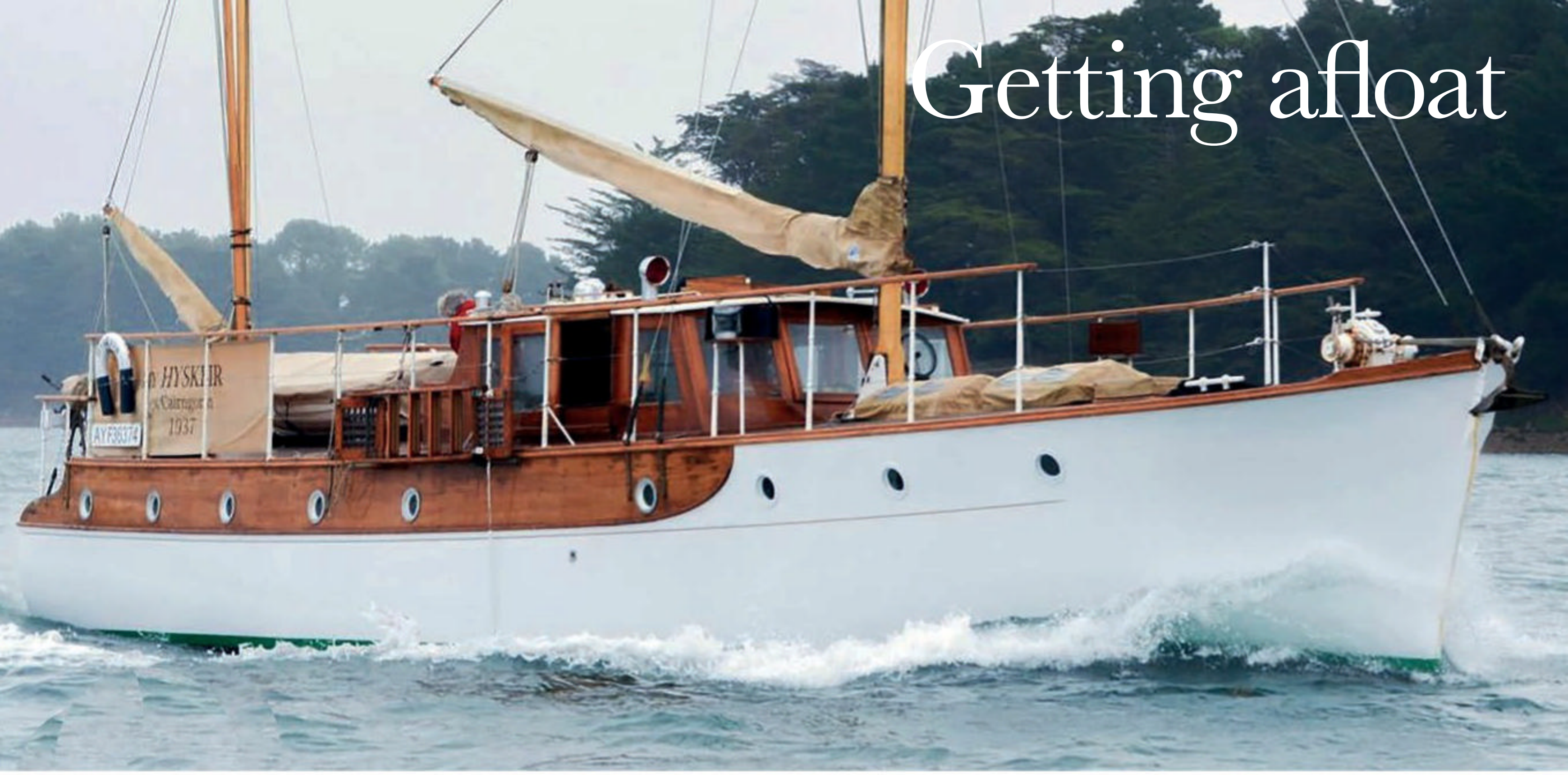

HYSKIER

Classic Little Ship motor yacht

Hyskier was built for Robert Thom, heir to a family of Glasgow tea merchants. Robert Thom's family enjoyed three summers of cruising the west coast of Scotland before the outbreak of the Second World War, during which *Hyskier* is recorded in 1940 as one of the Dunkirk Little Ships, and by 1942 was back in home waters as a member of the Clyde River Patrol, a flotilla of government requisitioned motor yachts operated by yachtsmen. These days, she's in Brittany with her current owner, the French living legend, Gérard d'Aboville, best known for his solo ocean rowing adventures: 1980 across the North Atlantic (a year which began with him taking part in the Paris-Dakar Rally on a motorbike); and 1990 across the North Pacific. He is also a politician, and founder of the popular traditional boat gathering La Semaine du Golfe du Morbihan.

"In her almost 90 years, the John Bain/James A Silver 50ft (15.2m) Silver Leaf-type classic twin-screw motor yacht *Hyskier* has been blessed with just a handful of careful and knowledgeable owner-drivers," says the broker. "We presume she came off relatively lightly at Dunkirk in June 1940, and some deep refits in her early 60s helped to steer this incredibly stylish, practical and usable yacht towards her centenary, while never interfering with her time-capsule 1930s authenticity. Her varnish and paint may not be concours right now, but the patina is evidence of her adventures. An honesty and a simple beauty shine through, and her relatively young deck leaves her ready to be used while perhaps planning a deeper makeover."

She's built of pitch pine on oak, bronze fastened and with iron floors and iroko hog and iron ballast keel. Her accommodation includes two helms (inside and outside), original (rebuilt in 2013) windlass, all-original oak interior, sleeping up to eight in the forepeak, guest and owner's cabins, with two further in the main saloon. She's powered by twin Leyland Thornycroft 6-cylinder diesels of 125hp each (1990) running through Newage PRM gearboxes, giving a very respectable maximum of 11kts or cruising at 8kts, while consuming around eight litres of diesel per hour.
Lying Brittany, Asking €195,000, sandemanyachtcompany.co.uk

LYS OF SLAUGHDEN

Stella project

Stella number 96, *Lys of Slaughden*, has recently arrived at Suffolk Yacht Harbour (SYH) and is afloat and in commission. She presents a great opportunity to join the Stella community at its unofficial hub at SYH, which is busy collecting and restoring old Stellas by means of hull-glassing to 'future-proof' them. *Lys of Slaughden* is one of a number of Stellas for sale, in varying states of readiness. The featured photo to the left is of a different Stella.
Lying Suffolk, contact jonathan@syharbour.co.uk
Tel: +44 (0)1473 659465

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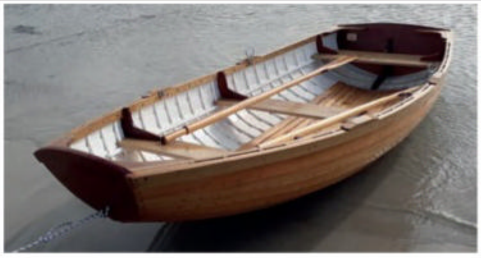
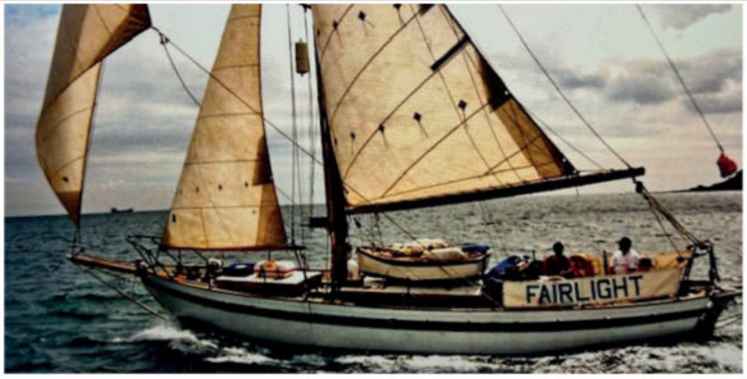
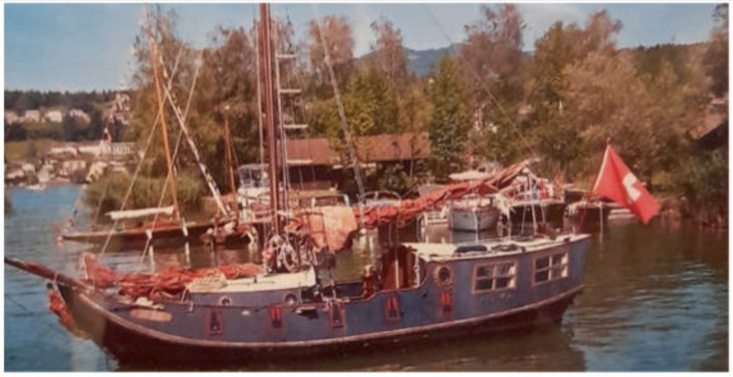


NEW CLINKER PRAM DINGHY
Recently completed, traditionally built. 10ft clinker pram dinghy. Larch on oak with mahogany and sapele, copper fastened. Hand made oars, chrome rowlocks and fittings. Very pretty boat. Can deliver at cost. **£5,000 ono.** Contact: **Alastair on 07936505755 or via alasdair.maclachlan123@gmail.com**



FAIRLIGHT
Very special classic 43' Bermudan Cutter, built 1938 by Hinks. Design developed by Laurent Giles as one of the very few examples of an enlarged Vertue, along with Wanderer 111 and Dyarchy. Current ownership for over 45 years, lying afloat in Cornwall. Pitch pine on grown oak frames. Five berths in two cabins. Delightful, spacious saloon, clear decks, large cockpit, easily handled, powerful rig. Volvo Penta diesel 50hp. Appeared in www.VertueYachts.com newsletter Spring 2023. Remarkably low asking price of **£78.000 Ono.** Contact: **syfairlight@gmail.com**



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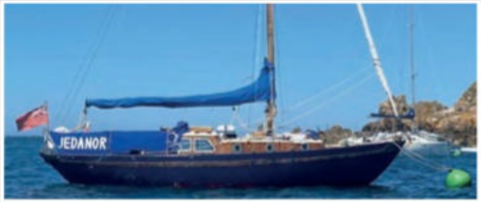
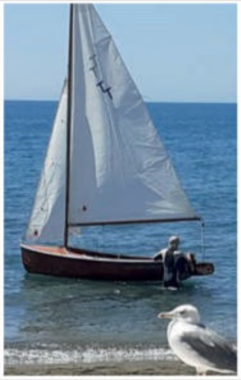
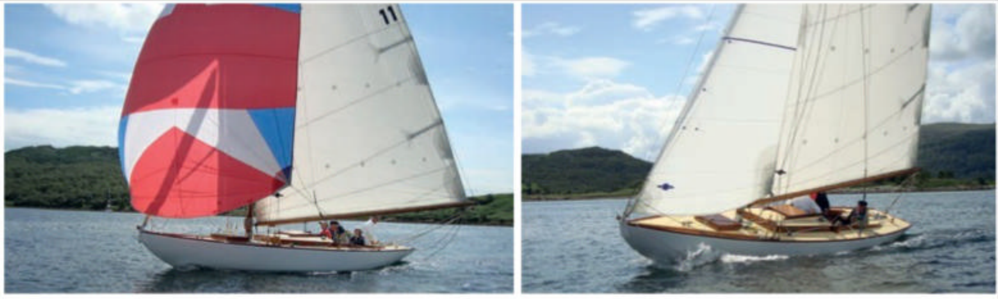


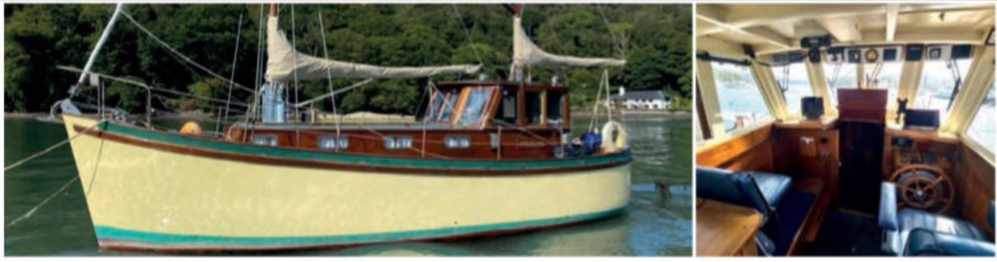
JEDANOR
Privateer 30 built by Falmouth Boat Co in 1964 and designed by Rodney Warington-Smyth. A four berth cruiser with a surprising turn of speed,she is a comfortable, stable and well equipped yacht. Jedanor is a perfect cruising boat for two people and the owners since 2012 have sailed her to Northern France, The Isles of Scilly and all points west of Chichester Harbour. Currently ashore in Poole. **£9,500** Contact: **anthony.young1948@gmail.com or Tony on 07581 127463**



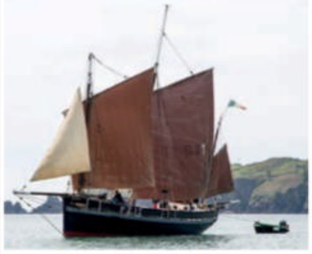
TWINKLE 12
A fine Twinkle 12 built by Wright & Sons, Ipswich in 1950. Traditional fine craftsmanship, mahogany on oak. This little gem sails both easily and safely. In 2023 she was fully overhauled and restored at the historic wooden boat shipyard in Málaga. All rigging is new and she comes complete with road and launch trailer, cover, new sails, oars, rowlocks, etc. She currently resides in the classic wooden boat museum, El Nereo, Málaga, Spain. Asking price for this little historical masterpiece is **€5,250.** Contact: **Geoff on 00 34 666061 096 or via oliascasa@hotmail.com**



ISLA
Alfred Mylne designed Scottish Island class yacht. Built 1958 at Ardmaleish yard. Length 28' overall. Yanmar 1GM diesel installed 2010 and recently overhauled. Currently stored at Fairlie Quay. **£15,000** Contact: **Peter Wylie on 07808 917 625 or p.wylie@btconnect.com**



MILLER FIFER 33 WOODEN MOTOR SAILOR KETCH BUILT 1962
Wylde One is probably one of the very best Fifers still afloat, having been lovingly maintained by a ship wright for over 30 years and upgraded by the present owner in 2023. She is very solidly built with excellent sea-keeping abilities. Powered by a New Holland 85hp diesel professionally installed in 2001 she cruises at 8 knots burning 4 litres/hour and with her 455-litre tank gives a cruising range of circa 900 miles. Presently lying on the hard near Dartmouth and reluctantly for sale as I need a bigger boat for extended ocean voyages in my retirement. Offers sought at around **£36,000.** Contact: **Chris on 07712 578961 or email me at chris.leonard@mego.co.uk**



PEEL CASTLE
50' three masted Cornish lugger built in 1929. Pitch pine planking on oak frames. 14.5' beam. Length over spars 85'. New solid deck 2023. All standing rigging overhauled, with new running rigging in 2024. Sleeps 12. Very comfortable live-aboard with solid fuel stove and beautiful craftsmanship. Cruised extensively in European waters and much admired at traditional festivals. 120hp Ford D series engine overhauled 2023. Fascinating history with extensive archive material & photos. Lying West Cork, Ireland.**€60,000** Contact: **Graham Bailey ghambailey@yahoo.ie +353 86 085 7067**

MARKLET -30 PILOT CUTTER PROJECT

Marklet -30 pilot cutter project. By Selway fisher. Marine clinker-ply, epoxy/ silicon bronze fasteners. Long keel, bilge keels, centre plate. Modern wood construction. 85% of the hull completed. Stern tube board by Farley restorations 2005. 653 SQ FT sail area. Multiple interior components completed. Ketch. Serious enquiries only. Based in the South East. POA. Sale price to include finish or sold as seen. Viewings welcome.

Contact: **lyd-the-flid@hotmail.co.uk 07827316063**

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PFM raced mid-late 80's, 90 horse power Yamaha, full rig 1984 This boat does require new flooring, however the hull is very sound and the trailer has three new tyres recently fitted. A chance for you to buy a piece of history. Collection in person - Hertfordshire area.

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LOGIE (GBR 339)

Vintage Dragon, built 1960 by Ernie Nunn. Wooden build. Only two owners since she was built and in excellent condition. Refitted extensively over the years, including new deck. Comes with 6 sets of sails (Fritz & North)..Raced extensively, including at Burham-on-Crouch, Medway, Falmouth. Comes with galvanised steel trailer Last in the water 5 years ago. Has been kept in a dry storage since then just outside of Burnham-on-Crouch, Essex. **£6,000**

Contact: **Oliver - omeyrick@gmail.com**

MISCHIEF III

FULLY RESTORED YONNE CLASS BERMUDIAN CUTTER, MISCHIEF III, designed by Dr. T Harrison Butler and built by A W Clemens of Portsmouth in 1935. Winner of 'Classic Boat Magazine' Best Restoration 2012, Voted 'TOP 100' Classics 2013. Looking for a new custodian **£39,500** Contact: **Jonathan on 07547042000 or via sellboats@vividbluemarine.com**

LETTY (1905)

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07836 765765

GALANTE

Robert Clark 1937 Cutter available for restoration transport cost only. Described by Yachting World as a Fast Family Cruiser, Galante is a one-off design built in St Monans Fife. Pitch Pine on Oak with Original Spruce Spars and mid-90s rigging. LOA 44 ft. Beam 9ft 4inches. Draft 7 ft. Perkins Diesel 4-108 40hp engine. Restored in the 1990s she is now in need of further restoration work. Ashore Inverness.

Contact: **Kirsten Geddes at kirged@aol.com**

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SPARKMAN & STEPHENS/SANGERMANI 71FT BERMUDAN YAWL 1963

In our quest for the most interesting classic and vintage yachts, every now and then we are offered the chance to market a boat that has quietly existed away from the limelight, in the same ownership, almost unaltered since new. ROSALÙ is one. Her Sparkman & Stephens/Cantieri Sangermani pedigree, performance, quality of build, and finish are assured; also that aura of a yacht still happy being what she was supposed to be. You enter her world, and just know she will never disappoint. ROSALÙ has always been enjoyed by summer, and been well cared for by winter, including occasionally necessary, more extensive refits and upgrades to her equipment. Her La Spezia berth is available by separate negotiation.

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PEGGY BAWN's exceptionally authentic restoration is recognised in her CIM rating's almost unrivalled coefficient of authenticity. Cruised and raced since, she is noted for perfect balance and good manners. In 20 knots under fingertip control her toe rail kisses the water, and up to 17 knots, a flutter in her jackyard topsail marks optimum groove. Easily rigged and sailed by two, this perfect Victorian cruiser/racer offers the opportunity to step back in time and into the shoes of her illustrious designer. Custom Harbeck road trailer included in her inventory.

€300,000 EUR **Lying UK**

SILVERS JOHN BAIN 50FT SILVER LEAF TYPE MOTOR YACHT 1937

In her almost 90 years, the John Bain/ James A. Silver 50ft 'Silver Leaf Type' classic twin-screw motor yacht HYSKEIR has been blessed with just a handful of careful and knowledgeable owner-drivers. We presume she came off relatively lightly at Dunkirk in June 1940, and some deep refits in her early 60s helped to steer this incredibly stylish, practical and useable yacht towards her centenary, while never interfering with time capsule 1930s authenticity. HYSKEIR's varnish and paint may not be concours right now, but the patina evidence of her adventures, an honesty and a simple beauty, shine through, and her relatively young deck leaves her ready to be used while perhaps planning a deeper makeover.

€195,000 EUR **Lying France**

ALBERT STRANGE 36FT GAFF YAWL 1925/1991

It is the opinion of many that NIRVANA should be classed as one of the prettiest boats ever designed, as expected from the pen of artist with yacht design as a hobby, Albert Strange. Designed in 1915 - one of his longest canoe yawls - the First World War intervened and her exquisite lines weren't given life by Jack Tyrrell of Arklow until after Strange's death. Stout construction from Irish oak and American pitch pine, oak rather than iron and steel floors, and many lovers over almost a century have ensured NIRVANA's survival - helped in no little way by falling into the hands of Albert Strange aficionados, the Clays of Woodbridge. She was very well named from birth, and is a dream to own and sail - particularly well set up for sailing by a couple.

£75,000 GBP **Lying UK**

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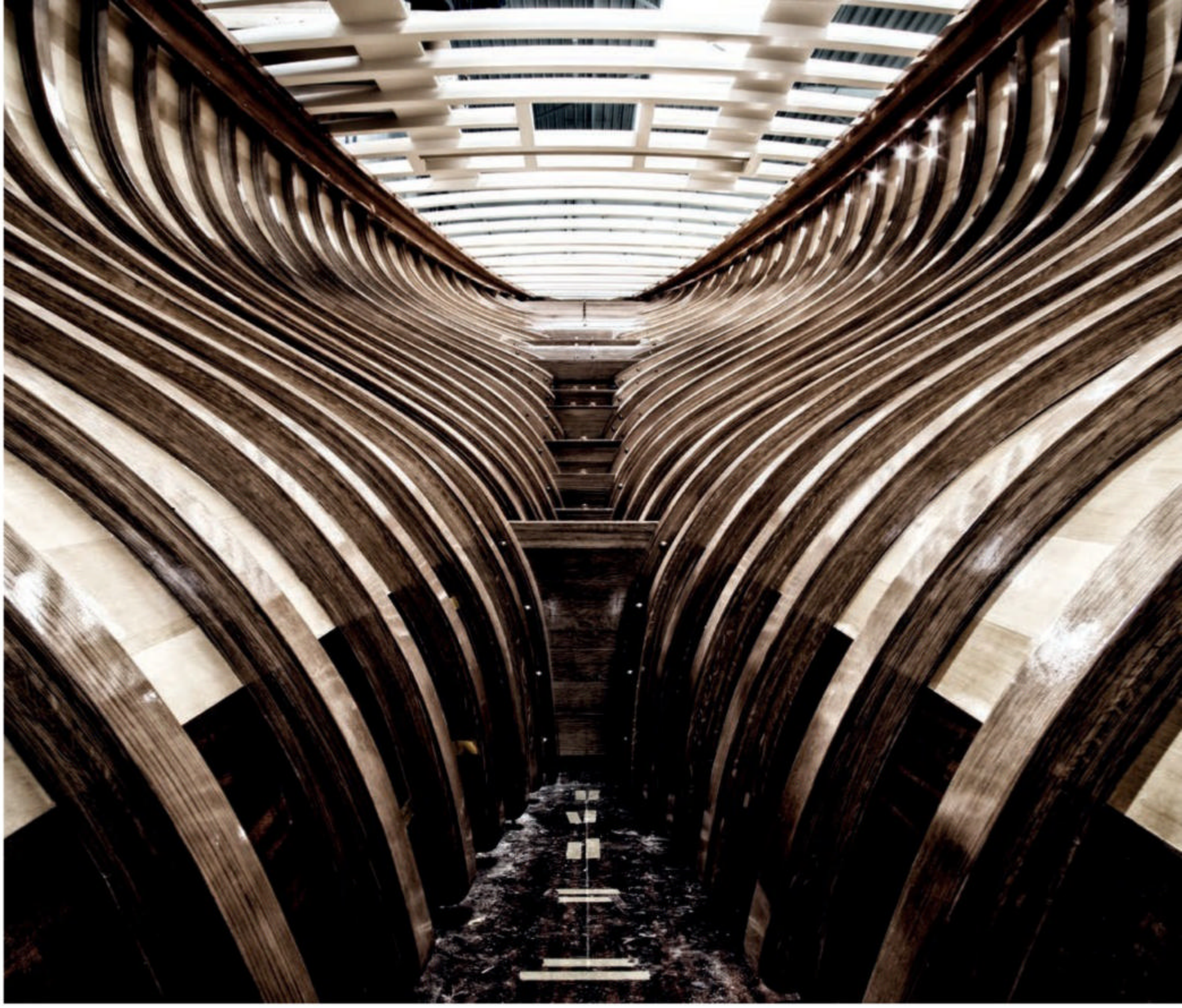
HULL AND HIGH WATER

The recent job on Tara Getty's 1938 S&S yawl *Baruna* was a true high-water mark in the world of sailing yacht restorations. We start our four-part series with captain Tony Morse, by looking at the hull

WORDS DAN HOUSTON
PHOTOS KOS EVANS



Above left: Baruna's restoration required that she was strong enough to take a more powerful modern rig, without compromising the historical accuracy of her original build *Above right:* Laminated frames in white oak support *Baruna's* new hull, double-planked as originally

Classic Boat: Why was it necessary to replace the yacht as she was?
Tony Morse: I remember vividly the first time I saw *Baruna*, standing across the marina in LA, utterly captivated by her profile. She was awe-inspiring, powerful, and majestic – her lines and proportions unmistakably bearing Olin Stephens' signature. I could already envision her restored, with every detail in mind.

Baruna is historically significant in offshore yacht racing. But over the years she had become neglected and needed more than just a basic restoration. She required a new owner with the passion and finance to restore her to her glory – with touches of modern comfort coupled with today's glues and paints to ensure she could safely see out the next 100 years.

It might sound simple but the restoration became a monumental task, requiring absolute precision and attention to detail. Initial assessments of the hull seemed straightforward, but upon dismantling, it became apparent that years of offshore sailing had inflicted significant damage; we had to rethink our approach.

One of the final steps of the restoration plan: sails and rigging, influenced the process from the start. We decided on North Sails' 3Di Endurance sails and Dyform rigging for racing under IRC. This meant the hull needed to be a structurally strong enough to handle the demands that would follow.

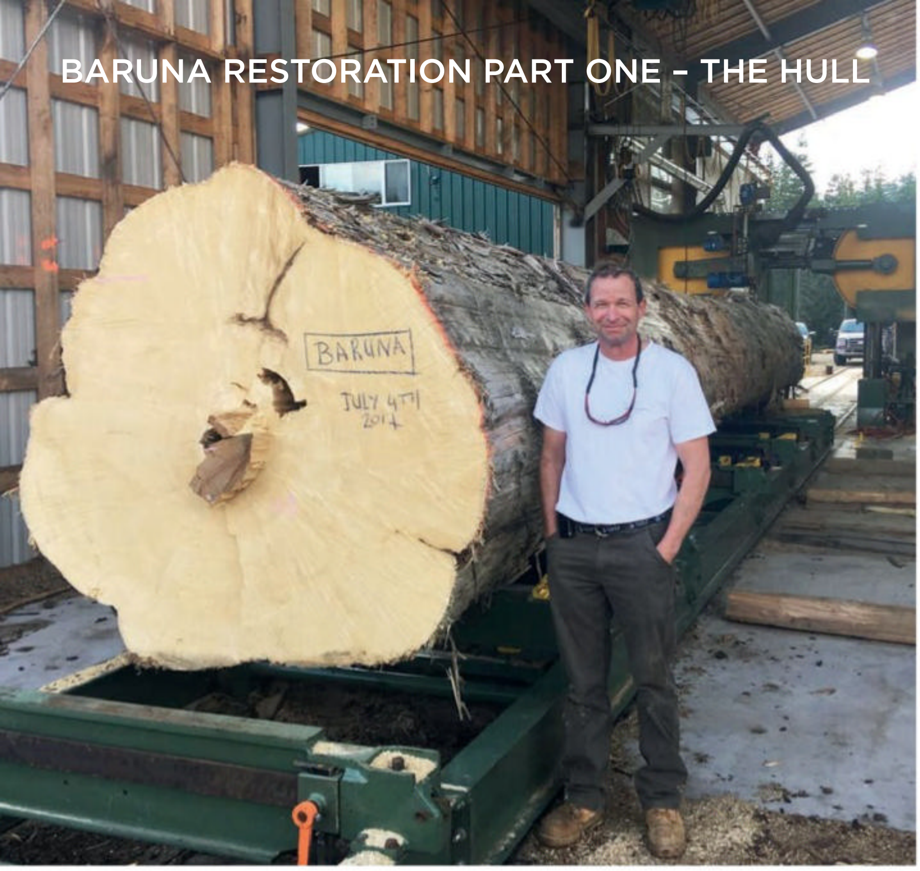
CB How did you choose the restoration team?
TM Hoek Design, who contributed design elements to *Baruna's* restoration recommended Robbie & Berking, and a visit to their yard in Flensburg did not disappoint. We saw their meticulous craftsmanship, and the place exuded Oliver Berking's passion for classic yacht history, making it ideal for *Baruna's* hull and deck restoration.

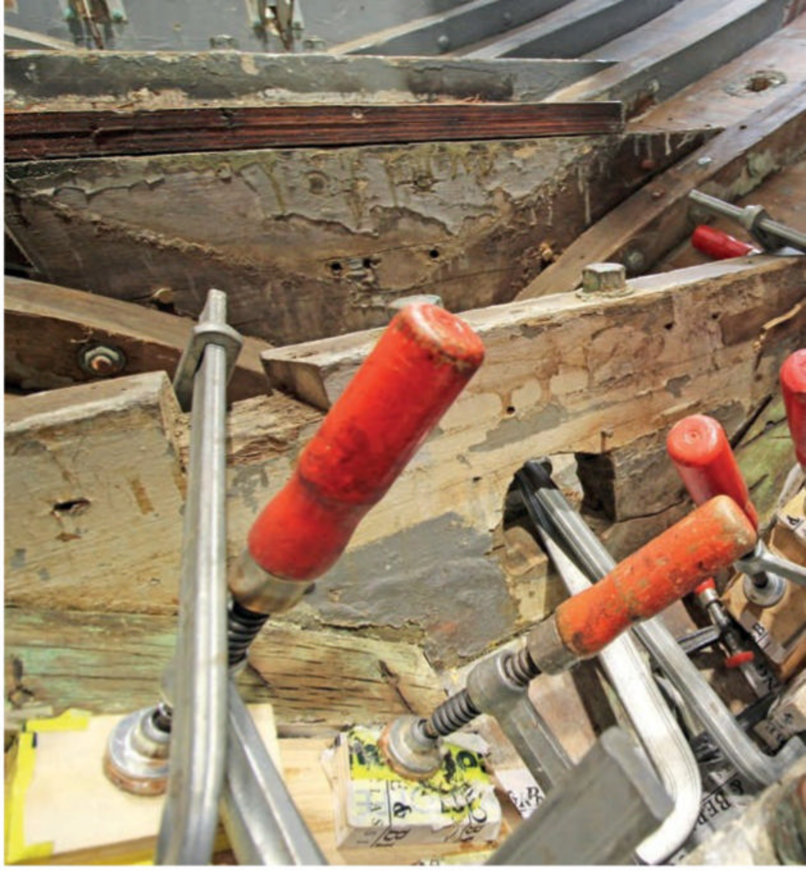
Building the rest of the team had its challenges – there is a dwindling number of people with the skill set required for such projects. But as work progressed, I brought in additional experts in their field.

Baruna's journey to Europe, under the watchful eye of Captain Rob Wallace, began from Los Angeles to Ensenada, Mexico. From there she was taken through the Panama Canal, and as hold cargo to the Netherlands, where, using a reliable pump, she went through the Kiel Canal, arriving at Robbie & Berking in September 2016.

CB What was the condition of the yacht's hull overall?
TM In Los Angeles Baruna had a bilge pump keeping her afloat, the decks were rotten, but the shape was there and we thought we had a good starting point.

It wasn't until we began dismantling the interior and onboard systems that we could truly assess the work. We discovered all sorts of surprises! Our initial intention was to salvage as much as possible, but that quickly vanished... We were shocked to discover 90% of the steam-bent white oak frames were cracked straight through. Rot had infiltrated critical areas around chain plates and deck fittings, spreading to the sheer clamp, beam shelf, and beyond. So scarfing in





Above left: John Lammerts van Bueren with the Alaskan yellow cedar tree for the inner hull skin

Above right: New white oak frames being laminated into the hull 'side by side'

new pieces of wood wouldn't be viable long-term. The backbone – her stem, wood keel, stern post, horn timber and floors, all of solid white oak – was riddled with splits, failing fastenings, and rot. It was clear a full hull restoration was necessary. Despite our efforts to preserve some of the original, only a handful of original white oak floors were saved.

CB How did the work begin?
TM First, scan the hull! An essential aspect of this restoration was maintaining the hull's shape, which required internal and external bracing. This was a meticulous task; we documented and followed every detail precisely: exchanging stem for stem, keel for keel, frame for frame, plank for plank. We used laser levels where necessary.

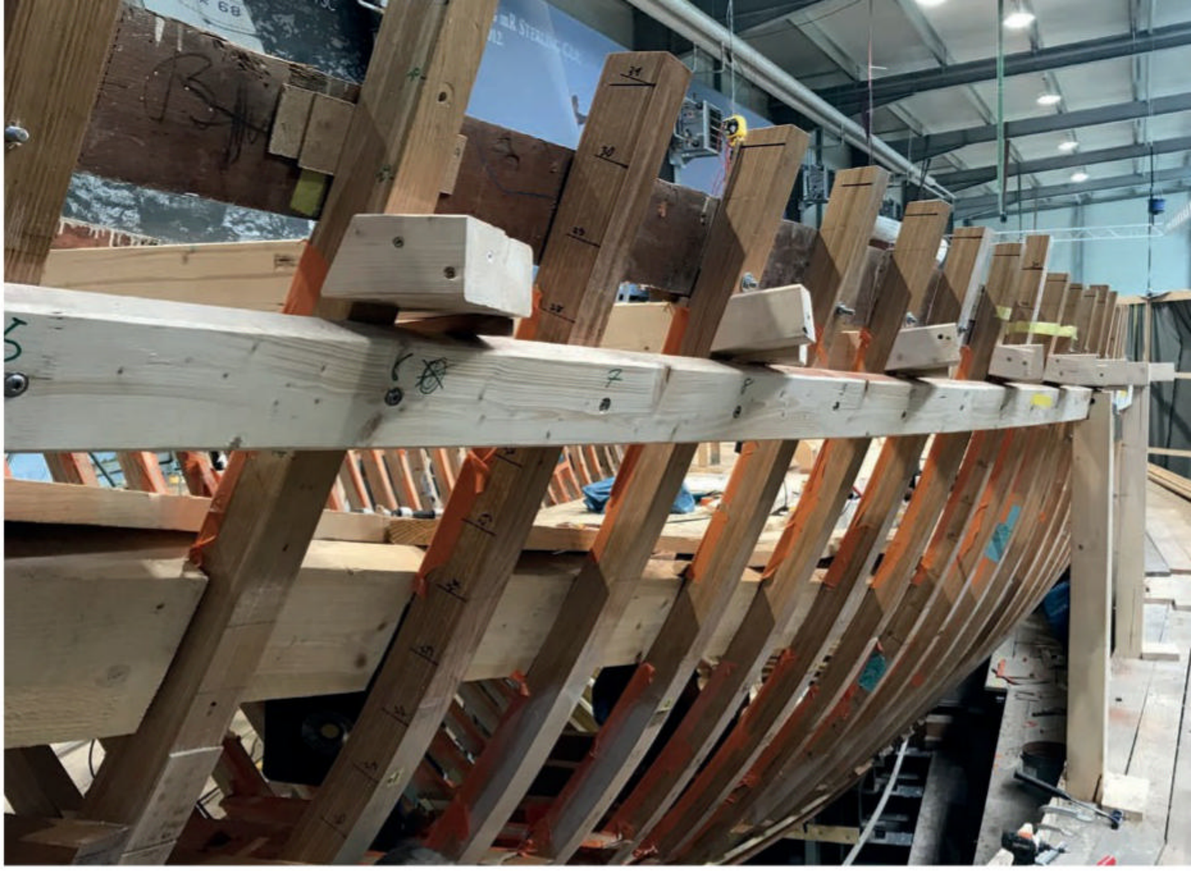
CB How was Baruna's hull built?
TM *Baruna's* original hull used the following species of wood.

- Stem, wood keel, sternpost and horn timber: white oak, scarfed and bolted, with carved rabbet lines and stopwaters fitted
- Deadwood: mahogany
- Frames: steam-bent solid white oak
- Floors: white oak
- Sheerclamp and beamshelf: Oregon pine
- Deck beams: spruce and white oak
- Shear and bilge planking: mahogany
- Bilge stringer: mahogany, consisting of four strakes running fore and aft, screwed to the frames
- Inner planking: white cedar, 20mm thickness
- Outer planking: mahogany, 25mm thickness

The planking strakes were staggered and fastened with bronze screws to the frames. Additionally, the double planking was back fastened from the inside between the frames using bronze screws. Shellac, a mixture of putty and red lead paint, was used between the planks.

CB: What was the process for disassembly and replacement?
TM With *Baruna* fully braced, work could begin on replacing the skeleton of the hull: the stem, keel, stern post, horn timber, frames, floors, sheer clamp, beam shelf, followed by the planking, bilge stringer, and deck beams. The process ensured the original form was preserved as components were replaced one at a time.

The original construction was beautiful but lacked the advantages of modern glues and paints. These now allow us to engineer wood for increased strength. The days of grown knees and stems are long gone, so we took full



advantage of modern glues and laminated wood. The new hull retains a similar construction but incorporates modern materials for enhanced strength and durability.

The stem, wood keel, stern post and horn timber, now of 10mm and 30mm mahogany laminations, are glued with epoxy and bolted with bronze bolts. The 112 white oak frames, composed of 8mm laminations, showcase *Baruna's* beautiful wineglass sections. These were laminated into the hull next to the frames they would eventually replace. We maintained the original shape as she had been built, even though we discovered some minor differences from side to side!

Above: Laminated frames with markings of the original planks. All frames are braced in position with the original sheerclamp, a temporary outboard bilge stringer, deck beams and beamshelf

Left: Exactly how Tony envisaged... *Baruna* restored with every detail

Her floors are mostly original white oak. The sheer clamp, beam shelf, and bilge stringer are Oregon pine, bolted and screwed. The deck beams are of 20mm laminated spruce. The Alaskan yellow cedar and mahogany planking is bronze-fastened to the frames and glued. The entire inner planking came from a single tree!

For her planking, the garboard strake was laid first, using mahogany for its durability in the bilge area; the first six strakes are mahogany, above which Alaskan yellow cedar was used for the inner planking. We did one strake at a time, progressing evenly up the hull to the sheer plank. Double planking, in mahogany, indeed takes twice the time! The faces of the planks were glued together and edge seam glued, then fastened to the new white oak frames with bronze screws.

CB Did the plan go to plan? Were there unforeseen hiccups?

TM There were several hiccups along the way but frankly, had we not encountered those, we might have missed out on some of the details we have onboard today.

After two years and seven months' work by a dedicated team of 10-12 craftsmen *Baruna's* hull – with new stem, keel, stern post, horn timber, frames, floors, planking, and deck beams – was fully restored. She emerged stronger and stiffer than ever. Every component was restored piece by piece, maintaining the original specifications and even some original slight imperfections, as well as some original white oak floors!

Never underestimate the importance of a solid hull and deck structure; it's the foundation upon which everything else is built.

Next month: Deck and Fittings

BARUNA 1938

BERMUDAN YAWL

DESIGN:	Olin Stephens, S&S
BUILDER	Quincy Adams Yacht Yard, Mass
LOA	72ft (22m)
LWL	50ft (15.2m)
BEAM	14ft (4.3m)
DRAUGHT	9ft 6in (2.9m)
SAIL AREA	2,242sq ft (208m^2)
DISPLACEMENT	41.6 tonnes

Marine Directory

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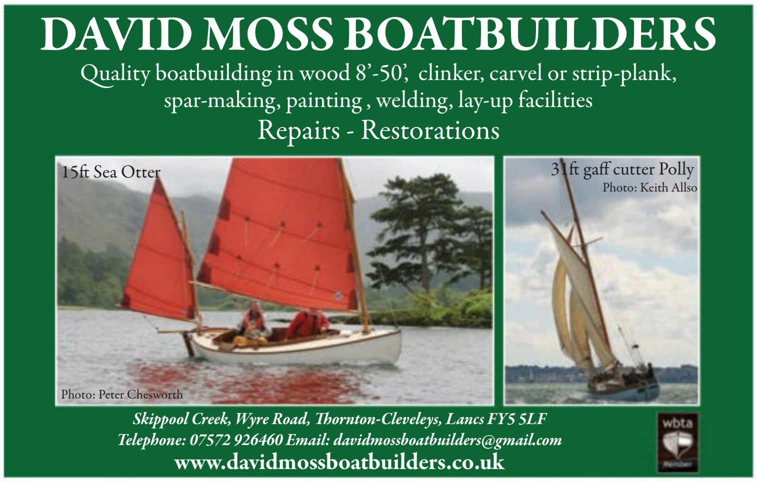

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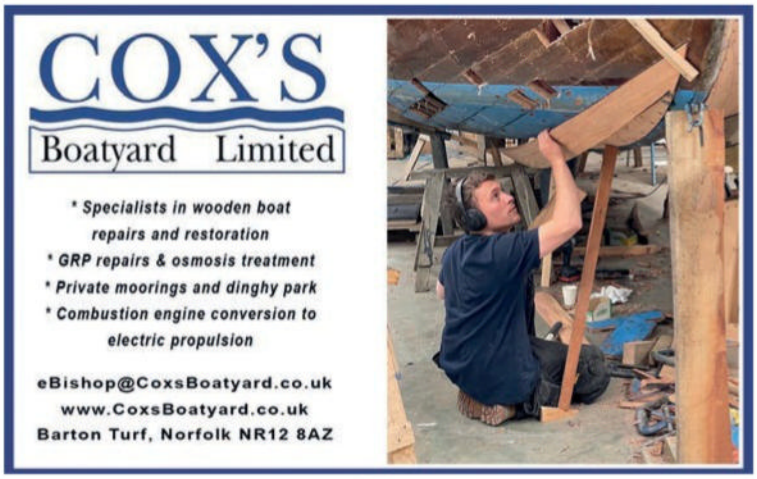

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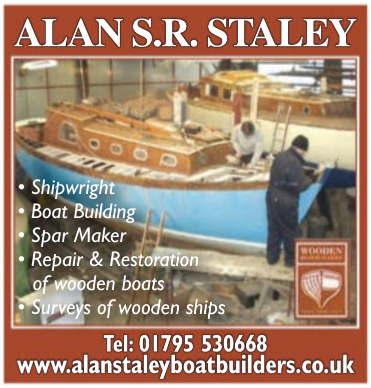

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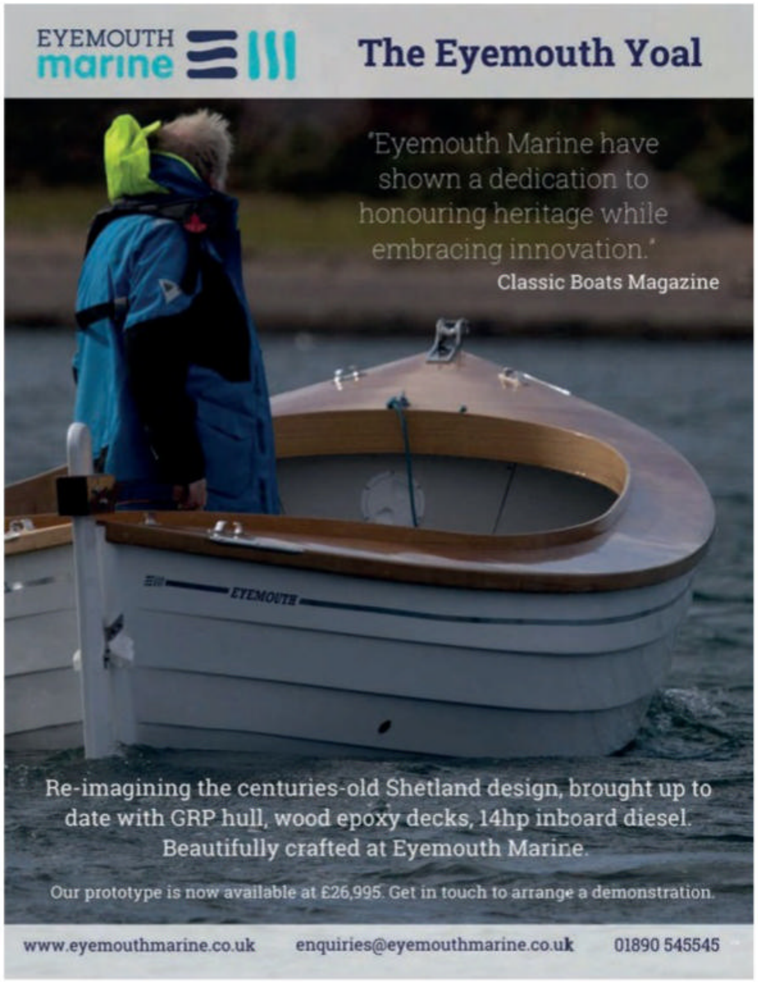

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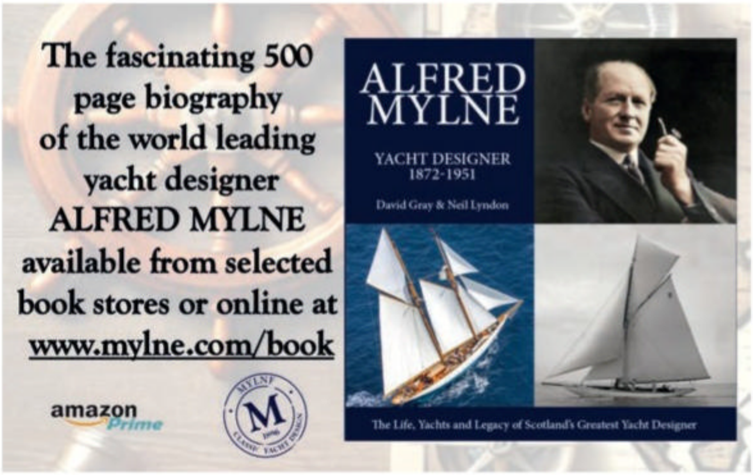

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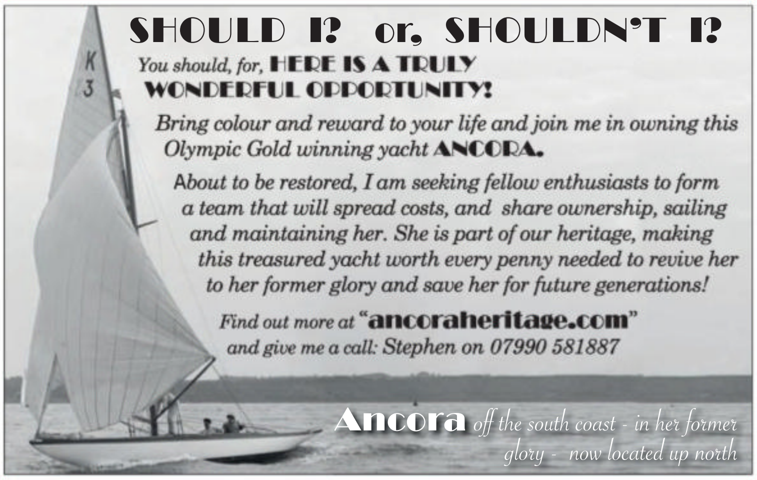

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WOODEN & STEEL SHIP REPAIRS, COWES

COWES SHED

There's plenty going on at Wooden & Steel Ship Repairs, where Sam Fulford and his team of shipwrights are working this historic and unique yard to its full potential

WORDS AND PHOTOS MILLY KARSTEN

Walking up river through Cowes, one street back from the edge of the Medina, many will know that your view of the water is somewhat hidden by the various boatbuilding yards that line the shore. The scene is well set with the sound of ferries coming and going, and the reassuring hammering and humming from shipwrights. Down Arctic Road, in a yard soaked in maritime heritage, Sam Fulford's Wooden & Steel Ship Repairs is in the heart of the action.

YARD HISTORY

Constructed by George Henry Marvin in 1885, the Arctic Dry Dock, Marvin's yard, and the yacht building and fitting yard on the plot, were likely the single largest yacht building and fitting enterprise in Britain at the time. It housed and worked on King George V's racing cutter *Britannia*, in World War I the large slipway was ideal for the conversion of large yachts and pleasure boats, and in World War 2 it was used as a base for Free French naval patrol boats.

BACK UNDERWAY

Sam took on the yard, then long unused and derelict, in 2019, with a vision of great potential for the world of smaller ship repairs. With his team of highly skilled shipwrights, Sam offers a remarkable standard of work from major rebuild and restoration projects to small essential repairs and maintenance. The yard boasts a dry dock of up to 250ft length/40ft beam, and patent slipway of up to 120ft length/20ft beam, able to hold an impressive 1,000 tonnes. The sheer scale of the projects underway here, and the buzz of activity around the yard, gives a strong first impression – this is a yard of serious intent and craftsmanship.

CURRENT PROJECTS

Sam was kind enough to show us around the yard and the current projects. In the Arctic Dry Dock, the major conversion of Philip & Son's 1963 *Conway Castle*, from Dartmouth, is underway.

Under Sam's care and with his team's skill, this ship has been extended by adding a 5-metre counterstern. It has also been fitted with a completely new superstructure, new engines, and stern gear; With new bulwarks, the finished result will have the look of an Edwardian steam yacht. They are currently in the process of laying the new Iroko and Douglas Fir deck.

Ursula, a 1953 oak-on-oak ketch, built in Germany, is often looked after by the yard, where she's undergone some major repair works. She was there on our visit, and was clearly benefiting from the skilled craftsmanship at Wooden & Steel Ship Repairs.

Adding to the action, Wooden & Steel Ship Repairs' Clarence Yard, across the Medina in East Cowes, also has a large project currently underway – the rebuilding, restoration and conversion of the 56ft (17.6m) MFV *Ocean Reward* into a trawler yacht.

It's safe to say there's plenty going on here, and a clear vision, where Sam and his team are set on working this historic and unique yard to its full potential, delivering top quality services and bringing these remarkable smaller ships back to their former glory.

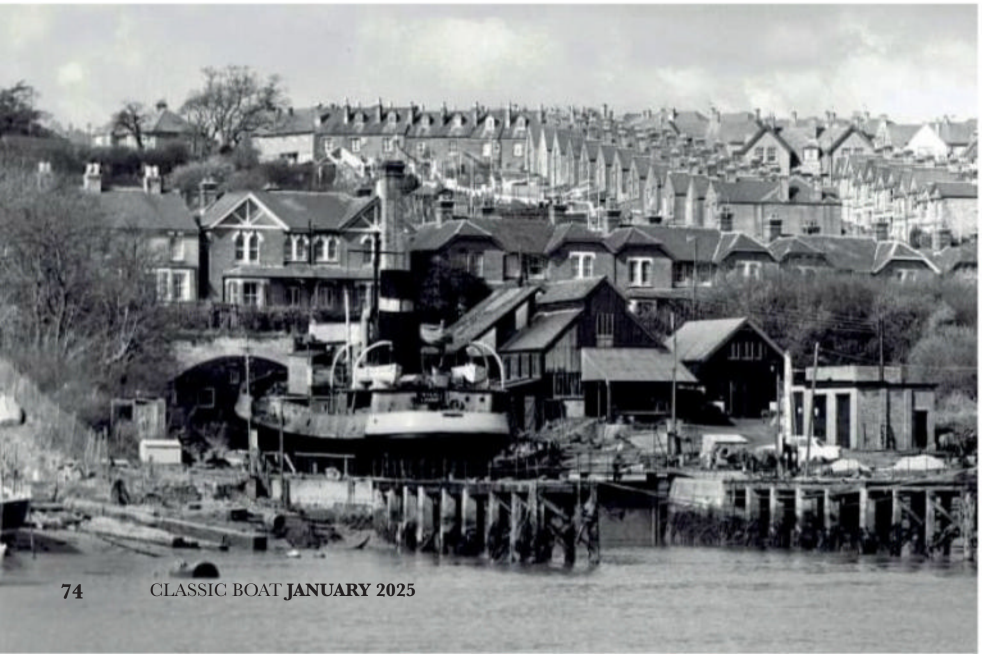
There are also some exciting Wooden & Steel Ship Repairs projects in the pipeline... stay tuned.

MORE INFO:

To learn more about Sam's yard, and to watch a video on the projects underway, go to the Wooden & Steel Ship Repairs website.

Below: Arctic Dry Dock in years gone by

Facing page, clockwise from top left: Sam Fulford; Upper deck sections pre-fabricated in the workshop, hauled out, lifted by crane and located; *Conway Castle* in the Arctic Dry Dock, and Sam's office behind; Sam Fulford on *Ursula*; Working below defks on *Ursula*; The extent of the work on *Ursula* looking forward



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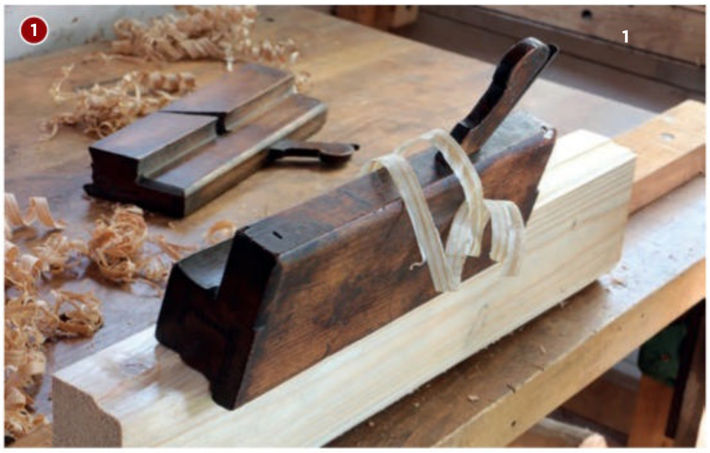
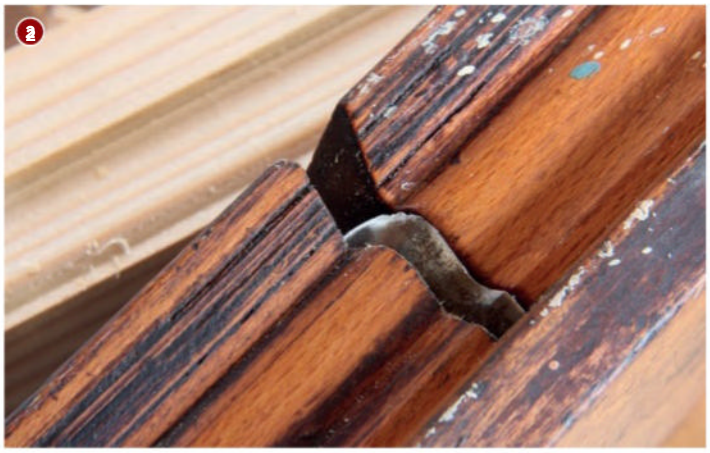
Boatbuilder's Notes

By Robin Gates





Sprung moulding planes

A full set of 18 matched pairs of round and hollow moulding planes, capable of making any moulding imaginable, would cost around £4,500 new but the two or three vintage pairs required to satisfy most needs may be had for pocket money. Better still, where one particular moulding is desired – an ogee or ovolo perhaps, to embellish panelling or beams – a dedicated moulding plane with iron shaped to that exact profile does the job .

Whereas a round or hollow necessitates preliminary work of establishing a channel or fillet to guide it, the sole of a dedicated plane has a fence, fixing the distance of the iron from the edge of the work, and a stop preventing the iron cutting too deeply (2). The tricky part is maintaining the plane at the correct angle to the wood in the early stages (1); a quarter-round ovolo would stretch to semi-circular if the plane is allowed to wobble. Keeping the fence well up to the edge helps but many such 'sprung' moulding planes were also scribed with perpendicular 'spring lines' which indicate horizontal and vertical when the plane is correctly angled (3).

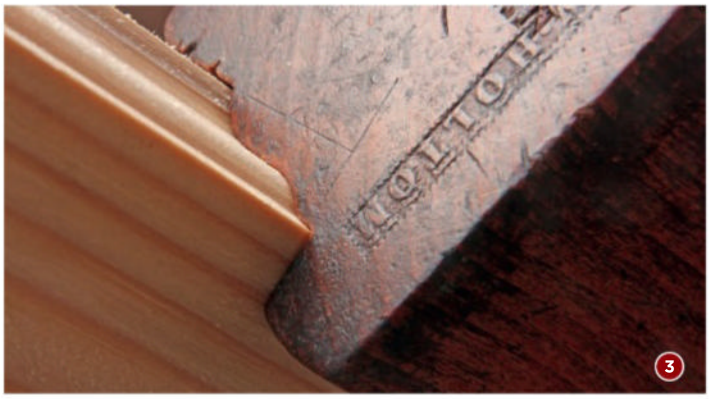
Whichever plane is used it's vital that the work stays put while worked, but a standard bench vice is unsuitable for long narrow mouldings requiring full-length support. The traditional jig is a somewhat cumbersome 'sticking board' clamped to the bench, essentially a long base backed by a batten with a protruding wood screw acting as a stop. The work sits in the angle between base and batten, while the wood screw bites into the end grain of the work. For this more simple jig (4) I have screwed the batten and stop directly to the bench, an arrangement both quick to set up and easy to stow.

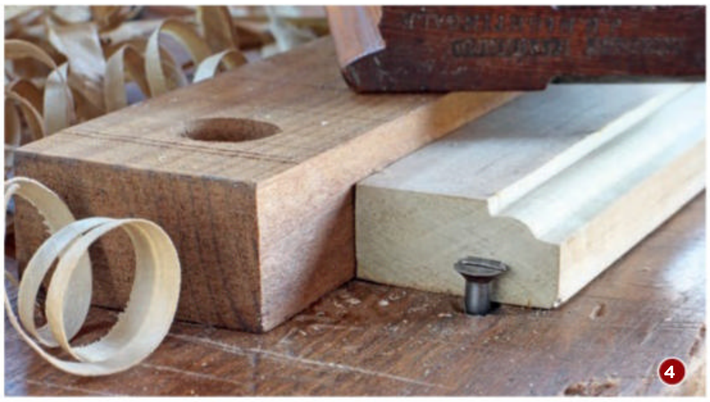
1 A sprung plane is worked at a precise angle

2 Spring lines scribed on the toe of this ogee plane

3 Fence and depth stop flank the ogee iron

4 Ovolo worked with bench-top batten and wood screw stop





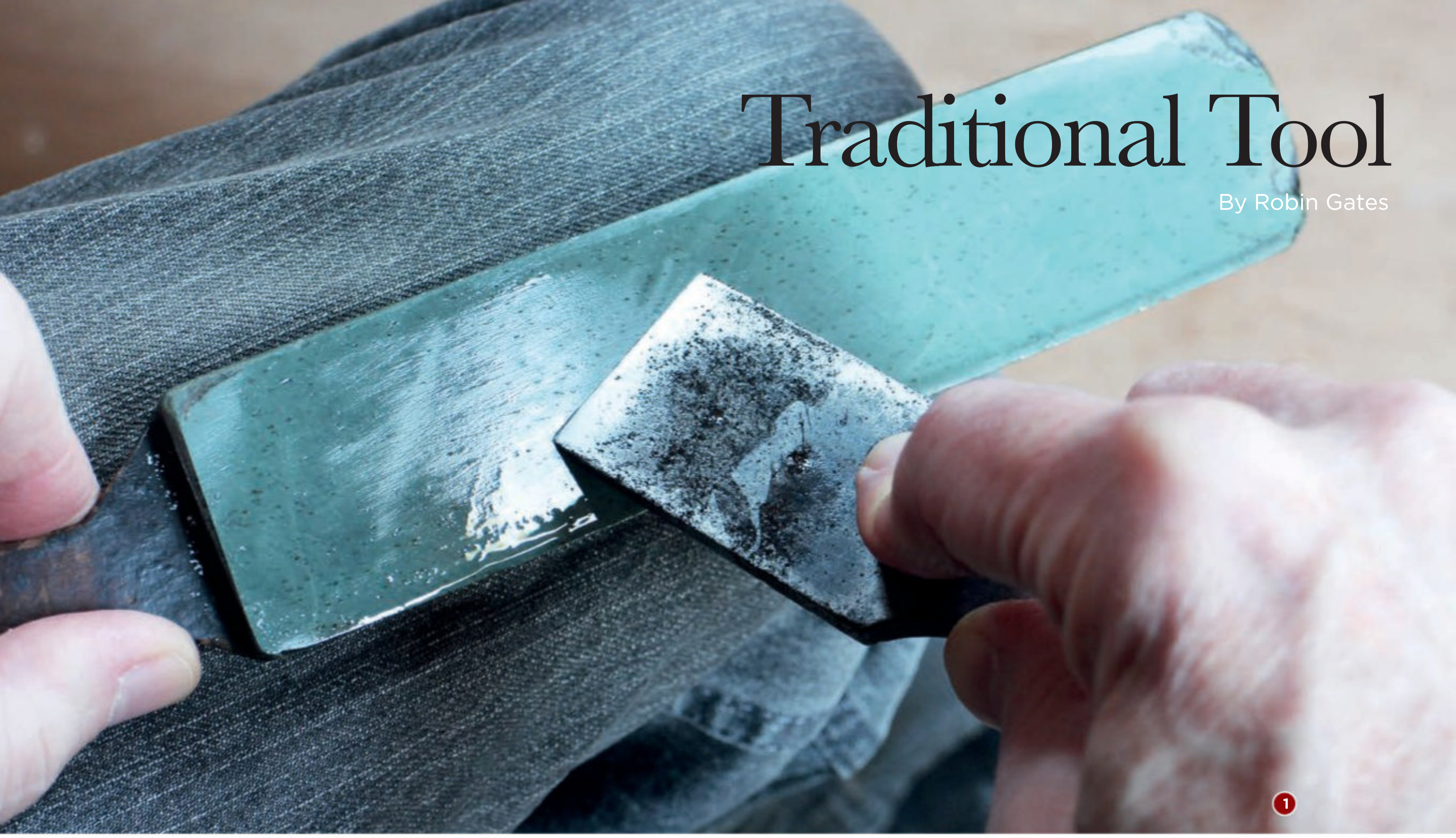
You can always rely on bob

While a laser level appears useful for establishing the centreline of a new build (ideally with the more visible green beam), in the confines of a small shed it's well to consider the bump-prone laser's leggy tripod of a tripping hazard, and typically less than 16 hour battery life. A clever invention, yes, but also clever marketing which claims a laser betters a plumb bob. The proof of the infallible bob lies in its 'plumb' verticality calibrated by gravity, a timeless force of nature essential even to the sophisticated laser whose electrode mounted to an internal pendulum is itself aligned by gravity.

Plumb is as bob does

Traditional Tool

By Robin Gates



HONING PADDLE

Tiredness and dull tools are a cheerless combination soon remedied by a mug of tea and a spell at the sharpening stones. While the tea brews and the body adjusts to angling a tiny interface of tool steel correctly upon the stone, so the mind turns to what's happening at the cutting edge. The feeling when the bevel finds its sweet spot compares to that moment when sails fill and the boat comes alive in the hand upon the tiller. You forget the hassle endured in getting to this point; everything is falling into place.

Despite our better knowledge of physical science behind the process, a mystical aura surrounds the rituals and materials of sharpening. Where space permits, an area set aside for sharpening will be found rewarding, not only through sharper tools working more effectively but, if the chosen spot is quiet and softly lit by a north-facing window, by creating an opportunity for mindfulness to soothe nerves frayed by a care-worn chisel or the halting progress of a dull handplane.

Although man-made stones are cheap and plentiful, those of natural quarried rock, redolent of their parent geology in grain and colour – Llyn Idwal, Charnley Forest, Arkansas, the Ardennes – instil the moment with a sense of awe that escapes the four-square manufactured block of carborundum. In the company of these ancient stones, our purposeful work of honing two flat planes to meet at a sharpness barely visible to the human eye acquires deeper significance.

An electric grinder combining wheels, abrasive belts, polishing mops and fool-proof jigs would seem to promise a short cut to perfection but perhaps smacks too much of laying aside the punt pole in favour of an outboard motor. Hand-powered sharpening attunes our senses to the process, meanwhile developing a skill that's transferable to unplugged situations. However, the typically large and boxed stone, anchored to the bench by sharp protruding tacks, would prove both cumbersome in the tool bag and painful on the knee, so the old school shipwright working on site reaches for their honing paddle, a lighter stone mounted to a sleek handled board.

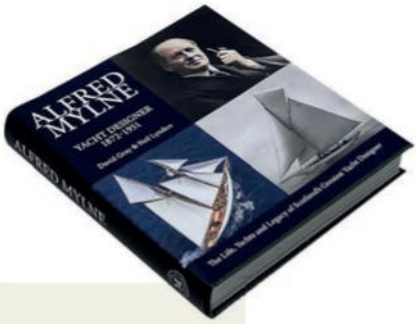
This Victorian example, freshly flattened on emery cloth, is reviving the edge of a contemporary salt-pitted chisel; both should remain serviceable for generations yet. But for less accessible edges like auger lips and spokeshave irons, an Eze-Lap diamond hone is unbeatable.

1 Honing freehand on the knee

2 Lapping the stone flat on emery cloth

3 Eze-Lap diamond hone for a spokeshave iron

Letters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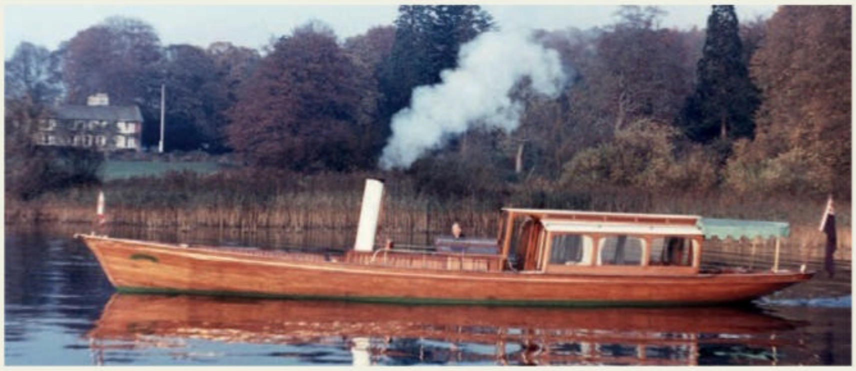
LETTER OF THE MONTH SUPPORTED BY MYLNE YACHT DESIGN

Prince Phillip and the rum



Great magazine as usual! Page 30 of the December issue mentions the *SL Branksome* and the 1976 trip that the Prince of Wales took aboard her. He was following in the footsteps of his father, the Duke of Edinburgh, who made a similar trip as Admiral of the Royal Naval Sailing Association. His visit was detailed in an article on page 69 of the February 1967 edition of Yachting World. *Branksome* dates back to Victorian times (1896) and contains many original fixtures and fittings, including velvet-embossed upholstery, a washbasin carved from solid marble, a silver tea service, and lace tablecloths embroidered with the boat's name. The famous copper steam tea urn mounted on the boiler is mentioned as being able to boil a gallon (!) of water in just 10 seconds. Prince Charles may well have made a cup of tea: however, the rumour is that The Duke of Edinburgh politely declined tea, deciding to keep to the naval tradition of downing a (generous) 'tot' of rum while afloat.

A photo accompanying the 1967 article shows the Duke emerging from the cabin, possibly about to take charge of steering the boat, hopefully before he downed the rum. Incidentally, I live at Branksome in Poole, Dorset and visited the museum at Windermere many years ago, saw the boat, and bought a lovely large print of it which is framed on my dining room wall. I was very tempted by the auction this month of the 6ft (1.8m) model!

Michael Scott

What a cover!

A great issue as always – I remember reading coverage of the Cowes-Torquay races as a boy growing up in rural Hampshire, so it was amazing to see *Thunderstruck* still racing – and at great speed. And what a cover! Do please congratulate your designer – it's the best I've seen in a long while, on Classic Boat – or any other magazine for that matter.

Daniel Rose, Ipswich, Suffolk

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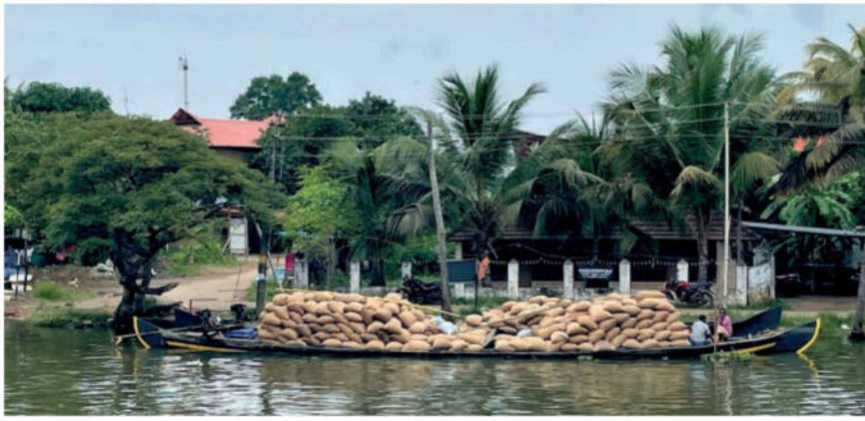
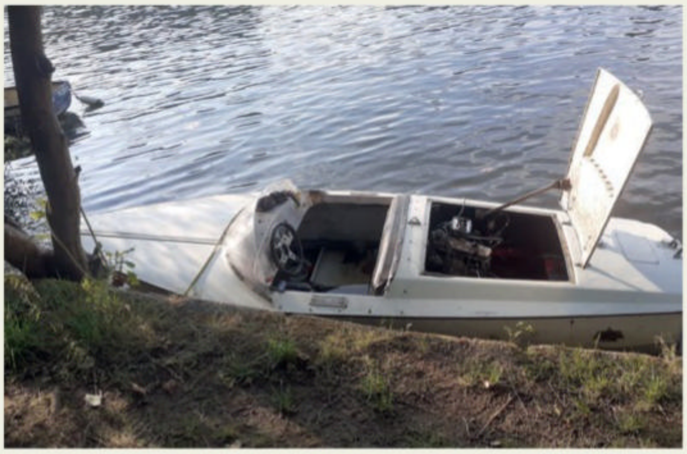
Indian bargees

This photo was recently taken in Kerala, showing coir coconut being transported. "Just one more sack, Dilip, she'll take it OK." The old Thames bargees would have approved.

Mike Wells





Albatross found

I read with interest the Bardot article with the Albatross speedboat (436) and I have attached a photo with a possible example. This is effectively abandoned on the Thames river bank at Hurst Park. I am not sure if it is the iconic Coventry Climax engine.

Ian Campbell

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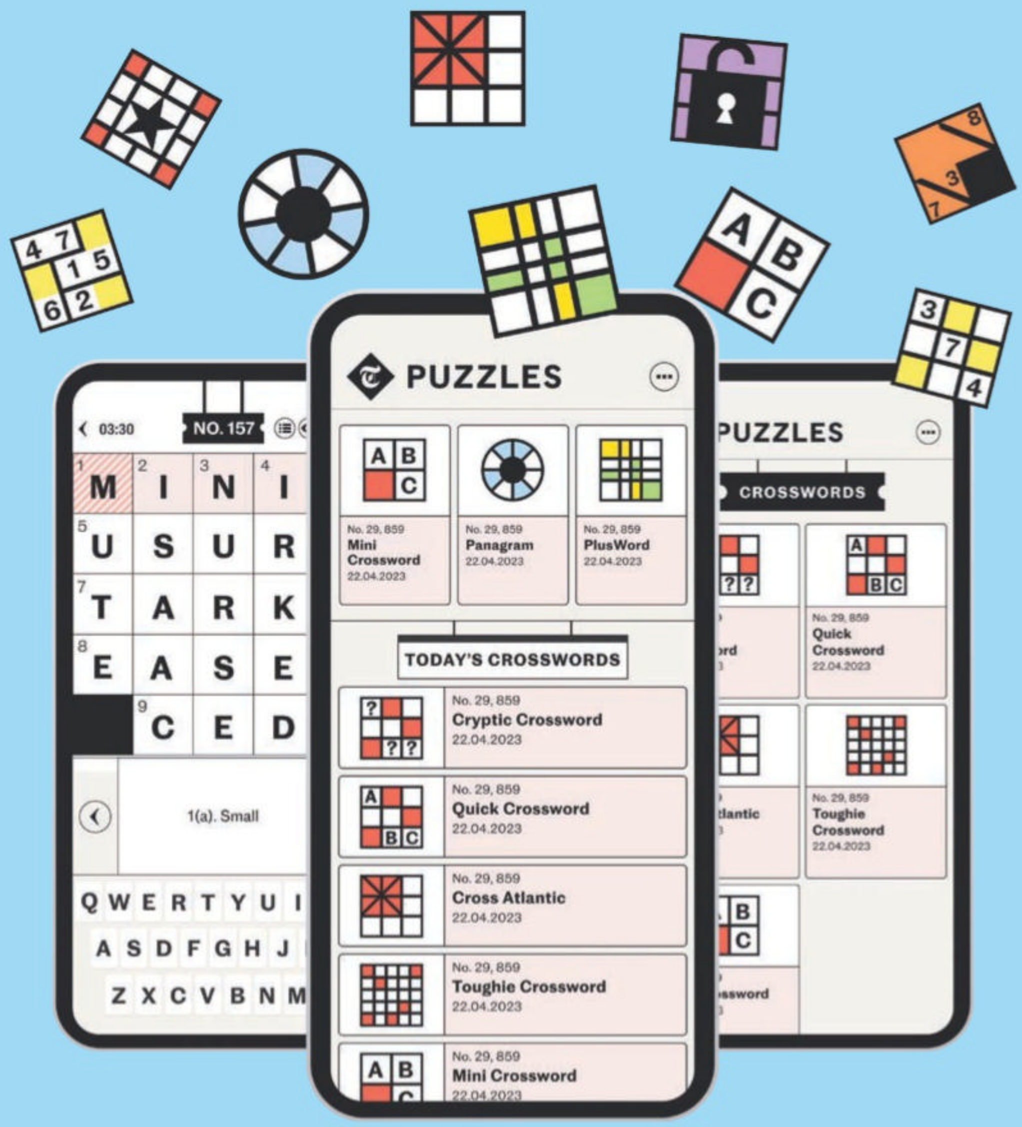
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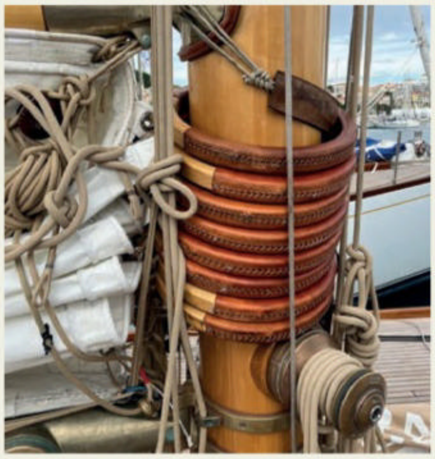
Next month

2025 AWARDS SHORTLIST

The boats that wowed the world in 2024. Make sure you have a read and cast your vote. This photo shows *Dorothy*, last year's winner in the small restored sailing yacht category



RIGGING TO WIN

Seeing the two New York 40s, *Rowdy* and *Chinook*, match race for the first time in 2024 was, for those present, the spectacle of the year. We look at *Chinooks'* re-rig back to gaff.

DRESSED TO KILL

Sydney design student Madeline McCormick had a photo assignment to complete. The answer came in the form of a fashion shoot aboard the 8-M yacht *Defiance.*

PLUS...

Celebrating maritime ways in the Pacific Northwest; a wooden runabout from Renualt; sailing in Alaska; a Carriacou sloop in the West Indies

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30 YEARS AGO

JANUARY 1995, CB79

After a spirited defence of chined hulls by then-editor Robin Gates in one of his ever-perceptive editorials ("they're not shoeboxes!"), we moved straight to the opposite: a report from La Nioulargue, the biggest, most glamorous regatta on planet Earth, with only the most curvaceous hulls. No chines here, shoeboxes or not. In this very issue, Les Voiles de Saint-Tropez – same event, different name – celebrates its 25th outing under its new name. Back in 1995, Nic Compton tried out the then-new 16ft glassfibre dayboat the Norfolk Oyster, still in build today by Neil Thompson Boats, and a great bit of kit it is, as I discovered on a test sail some years ago. Not cheap… not light… but very, very good. There was another great glassfibre boat in this issue – the new Grand Banks 36, about which you could say much the same as you might about the Oyster. I only know the wooden kind, but it looks like they didn't change the recipe too much when they switched to glass. And here's a thought. You thought AC yachts were fast at 50kts? Pah. What about *Vestas Sailrocket II* at 65kts? What if we told you that the world sailing speed record was actually set in 1938, at 143mph? It was, if you've not guessed already, an ice yacht, and we celebrated those wild machines with a visit to the frozen Hudson River for some 'hardwater sailing'.

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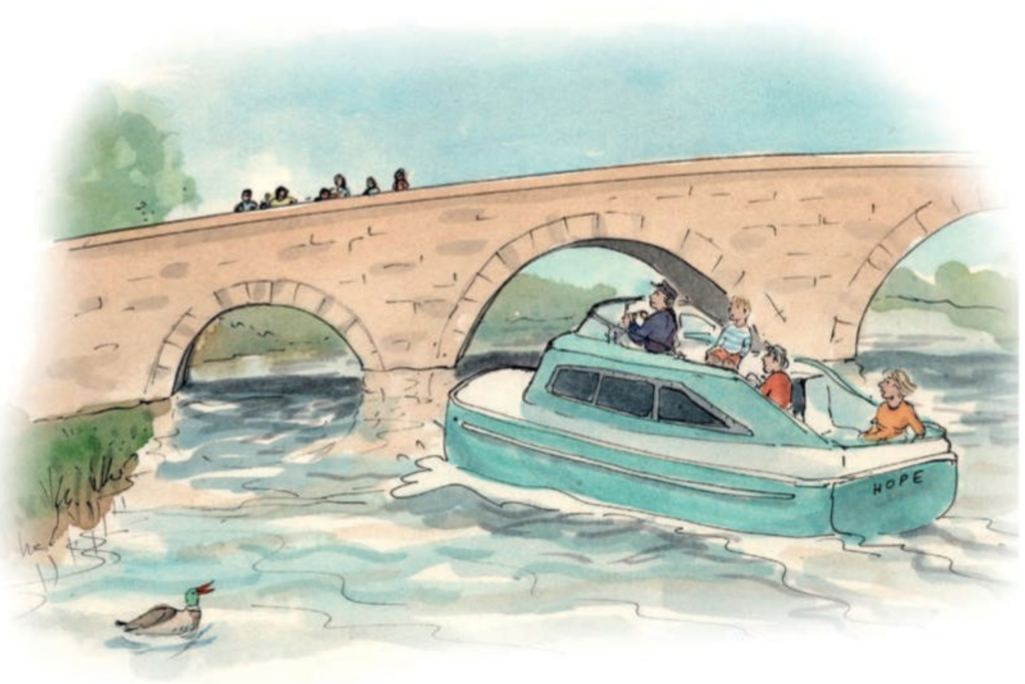
River of dreams

Forget the Bridge of Sighs, what you really need is a bridge of the right size, says Dave Selby


CLAUDIA MYATT

Sitting down on the parapet of the bridge over the river Great Ouse in St Ives I got to reflecting that there comes a time when a man, if he be a man at all, has to settle the score, reckon with his many failings, the vanity of his virtues and hollow wins, pay the piper, grasp the nettle and, when all is said and done, stand up. So I stood up.

And as I did so I looked ever the ledge contemplating my beginning and end and the emptiness in between and saw the horror of my past, for there on the medieval masonry was a faint trace of faded, pale blue gel coat. It transported me back to that long, long, endless, endless, everlasting eternal summer of 1974. Man, it was long. It was only a week's family holiday on a hire boat in the Fens, but felt a lot longer, I mean like really long.

The first four days passed without incident. On day one we motored a mile and a half and moored alongside a riverside pub using a technique I now know is called crashing. This upset my mum, so my dad went to the pub and stayed there for four days, making lots of new friends who went off him after three days, and we had to leave.

In the meantime we three boys had entertained ourselves royally. My younger brother, though rather accident-prone, took to life afloat like a brick to water and spent most of his time in it and under it. The plucky little fellow kept bobbing up again, so I tied more bricks to him. This good-natured jape upset my mother, as the prospect of having two boys left was still too many. My older brother, being a teenager, said nothing at all, as he was too busy making spots erupt on his face.

This is the life, I thought, being on the open waves. It's something I get from my father, who for a brief period was in the merchant navy as an assistant purser and as a result knew absolutely nothing about boats.

We were crashing in company with another family who were a bit odd as they seemed to get on and even talked, but on the fifth day we fell out with them. Their father had said something to my father about "paws," followed by "keeping them off," followed by "wife." This upset my mother, who locked herself in the master cabin, and never came out again. My father gunned the throttle and, with the other boat in hot pursuit, headed for the entrance of a narrow, reed-clogged river that didn't look wide enough to take our big blue caravan. When I asked my father why the signs at the entrance of the river read "Private – Keep Off," he explained "Shut up, that's the name of the river." Strange I thought, but not much odder than the Great Ouse, which is also the nickname by which I affectionately called my spotty older brother.

Then there was a strange graunching sound followed by a clunk and a bang. It seems some people value their privacy so much they put booby traps in the river. This one was a mattress and was wrapped round the prop. My father tried to free it with the boat hook, which got tangled in the mattress and stayed sticking up out of the water like a flag staff. After accepting the apologies of the other father for his earlier outburst, my father accepted a tow. As we approached a lock their boat slowed and we crashed into the back of them. Nevertheless, it was nice to see my mum again as she poked her head through the hole in our bow. As we left the lock my older brother, who thought he was Marc Bolan, tried to step back on board and the boat hook went up the trouser leg of his ridiculous yellow flares and suspended him there. He still didn't say anything, though his face got even redder and his pustules started throbbing ominously like Vesuvius before it blows.

Oh, I almost forgot what started this rumination off. A few days before, when the boat was still more or less a boat, my father decided to show off and take the smaller span of St Ives bridge. The arch caught the corner of the sliding canopy, which then slid off the back of the boat and plopped into the water.

Not much else to report really. We returned the remains of the boat and my father drove off with the other man's wife. I fell in love with the younger sister on the other boat and never saw her again.

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